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## THE LEGACY OF GREEK THOUGHT\*

W. K. C. GUTHRIE

THERE MAY be some who doubt the value of spending so much time on studying and keeping alive the past. It may even seem positively harmful, as tending to shackle our minds to these past ways of thought and hamper our march towards the future. This is not in fact so, and I would commend to you the recent observations of a French scholar, H. Marrou. I believe they represent a truth, and it is one which may not have occurred to you.

He first recalls that we are the heirs of the Greeks and Romans, claiming that 'everything of importance in our own civilisation derives from theirs'. The value of studying this heritage of thought, he continues, is as a means, not of perpetuating it, but of *liberating* us from the past. To be aware of it makes it easier to escape, so far as that is possible, from the bondage of historical necessity, liberating us from absolute dependence on the historical tradition which has made us what we are.

I think this is reasonable. Psychologists teach that the experiences of childhood, if they have been forgotten by the conscious mind, may determine and tyrannize over our character as adults. But if they are recalled to the level of consciousness, we may free ourselves from their effects and enjoy a greater independence of character and action. An awareness of the historical processes which have moulded the thinking of our whole civilisation can serve a similar purpose.

\* Delivered as a public lecture at the University of Melbourne on 13 September, 1957, during Professor Guthrie's visit to Australia as the guest of the Nuffield Foundation.

You will, I am sure, appreciate that in undertaking to expound the legacy of Greek thought in an hour, I have assumed an extremely difficult, if not impossible, task. It is not simply that this legacy includes Plato's and Aristotle's philosophy, Herodotus's and Thucydides's very different kinds of history, Homer's epic, Attic tragedy and comedy, the miracles of vase-painting, the sculptures of Olympia and the Parthenon, and a great deal else besides. You know all this as well as I do, and you are entitled to say: 'Yes, of course the subject is vast and complex, but what we want from you is not a mass of detail but a single leading idea. Sum it up. Tell us what is the chief character of this Hellenic mentality which has determined the direction of so much of later European thought. Has it been a good thing or a bad thing? If you are a real scholar and not just a pedant, you ought to be able to put your finger on this at once, explain it, bring it to life with a few well-chosen illustrations, and leave it at that. We ask no more.'

All right, that is what I am going to try to do. But there is still a primary difficulty apart from the mere size of the subject and embarrassment of choice. I can say at once where, in my opinion, lies the chief contribution of the Greeks, for good or evil, to our Western outlook. It is summed up in what Professor Fraenkel has called their preference for 'the intelligible, determinate, mensurable, as opposed to the fantastic, vague and shapeless'. Their rationalism, their love of order and limit, of symmetry and pattern, of the philosophy of 'nothing too much'—in this and all it stands for lies the essence of their legacy, and this it is that I want to enlarge on and illustrate in the rest of this lecture.

At once however one is faced by the fundamental dualism in the Greek nature. Since Nietzsche at least, one does not have to be a classical scholar to be aware of the distinction between the Apolline and the Dionysiac, and I am sure I should leave you puzzled and critical if I did not show myself aware of powerful forces at work on the ancient Greek spirit which pulled it in a direction clean contrary to rationalism and self-control. What have these and related qualities to do with the wild orgies of the Greek bacchants, whose permanent place in the Greek legacy has been assured by the dramatic genius of Euripides? What has the passion of Sappho to say to reason and moderation? What heed did Empedocles pay to the doctrine of 'nothing too much' when he accepted the homage of his fellow-citizens with the audacious boast: 'God am I, mortal no longer'? Was this not the height of *hybris*, in Greek eyes (so we are taught) the one sin above all others certain to be visited by divine displeasure? This sin of insolent pride, said Aeschylus, begets yet greater pride, and the end is total destruction. Yet



Empedocles too was a Greek, and his words were no mere self-glorification, but the outcome of an elaborate system of religious belief.

This dual outlook is closely bound up with the particular mixture of races that went to make the Greeks of classical times. Greek culture may be said to have had both a father and a mother. Greeks, in the narrow sense of those who brought the Greek language to the peninsula which they made their home, were an invading people (or rather series of peoples) from further north, who brought with them an Indo-European tongue that has almost completely submerged the speech of the original inhabitants. They were warriors whose home was a moving camp, their supreme deity was the male sky-god Zeus, with whom, and with his fellow-gods, their relations were marked by a kind of man-to-man frankness. The inferiority which they felt was that of a lesser man to his feudal lord, to whom he owed certain duties, but expected proper treatment from him in return. It was a clear and human world that they lived in, thoroughly masculine in tone, already emancipated from the mysterious terrors that haunt the more primitive mind.

If the Mycenaean Greeks—the prototypes of Homer's heroes—represent the father-element in Greek civilisation, its mother was the age-old culture of the peoples of the Aegean basin whom the Greeks found when they arrived. Their static existence and their closeness to the soil had preserved a more primitive outlook, and they worshipped above all the feminine principle in nature. The deity to whom they looked was Mother Earth, from whom all life, including human life, had come, and who received the lifeless body again at death, as she received the dry seed that fell from the dying plant. This analogy was not lost on the peasant, and so the Great Mother, in addition to all her other gifts, encouraged the hope of immortality and inculcated the germs of a mystical religion: for it is by dropping into her bosom that the seed is born again, and if men too are to be born again it will be by a direct contact and communion with the universal Mother. Of such ideas were the Eleusinian mysteries born, which were later adopted by the greatest city of Greece and became an integral part of classical Greek life and thought. In that and other cults of the same type the Greeks encountered the notion of apotheosis for man, which Empedocles in the early fifth century claimed to have achieved. To the Homeric hero it would have been an impossible and blasphemous suggestion.

When the earth is thought of in terms of the human analogy—that is, as a goddess—then to be fertile she must have her consort, who was also imagined as her son. Such pairs existed all over the Greek and Near Eastern world—Demeter and Triptolemos, Aphro-

dite and Adonis, Cybele and Attis, Isis and Osiris, etc. But among the Greeks the greatest of these young male fertilising figures was Dionysus, lord not only of the grape but of every form of life-giving moisture—the saps and juices of plants, the blood, semen and all the other humours of the living body. The absorption of such a figure into the Zeus-led pantheon of the invaders presented peculiar difficulty, but there was no possibility of rejecting so powerful a figure of their adopted country and its neighbours, and the situation may be said to have been saved by the Greek genius for compromise—a story that we cannot go into now.

The interplay in classical civilisation of these two contrasting elements—the masculine and the feminine principles, the Indo-European and the Mediterranean, the clear-headed fighting man and the humble agricultural worshipper of the Earth-mother with his magical rites and mystical longings—forms a fascinating study. For the female element did not die out entirely, but remained and profoundly modified the other. It would have been unforgivable if I had not mentioned it. I must, nevertheless, make the other my main topic. In the mind of the Aegean peoples lurked plenty of the ‘fantastic, vague and shapeless’ to which, as Fraenkel rightly said, the Greeks on the whole so strongly preferred the intelligible, determinate, mensurable. The former may be found all over the world at a certain stage of culture, with only minor differences. The latter led to the unique achievements of Greek thought and art, and it is in it that we find their most valuable and characteristic legacy to modern times. So from now on I shall be talking of the Greeks as a predominantly rational people; but since in such a short space I am bound to be rather one-sided, I should like to bring to your notice the excellent book of Professor E. R. Dodds called *The Greeks and the Irrational*, in which you will find full justice done to the other side of their minds which here I must pass over very lightly.

Another way of putting Professor Fraenkel’s remark would be that the Greeks always strove to exalt the conscious processes of the mind and suppress the unconscious or sub-conscious. It is true that early Greek art and literature provide a wealth of mythological symbols that seem to come straight from the case-book of the modern psycho-analyst; and we recall too the surprisingly Freudian recognition of incest-dreams in Plato’s *Republic*. But these are mentioned only to emphasize the paramount necessity for the controlling force of reason in our lives over the brute that everyone keeps chained within him; and in general it may be said that as the Greek mind came to maturity, so it learned to value the conscious reason and take it for granted that any other expression of the



spirit—imagination, emotion or whatever it might be—was inferior or downright bad. The most anti-Greek figure, one might say, in recent English literature is D. H. Lawrence.

The view of poetic inspiration which Plato expresses in the story of the unfortunate Tynnichus is a typically Greek one. Tynnichus was the world's worst poet, but one day he wrote a superb poem, a success which he could never repeat. Clearly, says Plato, he was inspired, and the object of the god in inspiring him was to show his power, how he could if he wished produce a real poem from the most unpromising and unlikely source. Thus the inspiration of Tynnichus is a proper subject of ridicule. Not all Greeks would have gone the whole way of claiming that every poet was in the same position of dependence on divine caprice, but all would have maintained that to have any hope of being a consistently good poet you must rely on your own powers of invention, your human wisdom and acquired technique—not wait on the divine afflatus.

The same preference for sanity and balance is discernible in Greek philosophy from its earliest days. Even in the oracular and paradoxical sayings of Heraclitus we read that the sun will never overstep the measures of his course: if he did, the Furies, hand-maids of Justice, would find him out. Throughout the universe there runs a *logos*, or law of proportion, which ensures that all its changes and upheavals take place within fixed limits.

But it is in the Pythagoreans that we see it most clearly. To Pythagoras (6th century B.C.) was given the credit of having first designated the universe as *cosmos*—a Greek word which from Homer's day onwards had had a double meaning: first 'order' or 'due arrangement' and secondly 'beauty' or 'adornment'. So closely were these two notions connected in the Greek mind. The world displayed an intelligible order, which made the study of its laws both possible and infinitely worth while. With this statement that the world is a *cosmos*—that a hidden order underlies the chaos of appearances—the fundamental postulate of all natural science first sees the light.

With it goes the corollary that if we would understand the world of nature, it is this formal side that we must grasp—the principles on which it is constructed—rather than its material. Matter is distinguished by its qualities, form is quantitative; naturally therefore the philosophy of Pythagoras and his followers was mathematical. No clear distinction between form and matter had yet been formulated, and the Pythagoreans expressed their discovery in what may seem to us a paradoxical way. They said: 'Things are numbers'.

Their mathematics, it should be explained, was geometrical rather than arithmetical. They saw the unit as a point, 2 as a line,

3 as a surface, and 4 as the simplest geometrical solid. They then conceived of the physical universe as built up out of regular solids, which by the time of Plato were recognized to be five: cube, tetrahedron, octohedron, dodecahedron, eicosihedron. Of these five figures Plato in the *Timaeus*, following Pythagorean models, supposed the physical universe to be built up, four being assigned respectively to the four elements and the fifth as the structural basis or framework of the spherical cosmos itself. The transition from geometrical solid to physical body seems, at least to the view of commonsense, to indicate an over-enthusiasm for the exciting new discovery of mathematical form and to suggest that their thought was still confused. But of the fruitfulness of the quantitative, mathematical approach to nature the whole history of physical science, not least in the twentieth century, bears ample witness, and even the statement that things are numbers may seem to some mathematical physicists to be not too wide of the mark.

We are told, by the way, that the father of Pythagoras was an engraver of gems, and it was Greek custom for a son to be trained in his father's craft. This led Sir William Ridgeway to make the interesting suggestion that his mathematical conception of nature arose out of his familiarity from an early age with the shapes of precious stones and other mineral crystals. Quartz crystal would show him a perfect pyramid, iron pyrites a cube, the garnet a dodecahedron and so on. Crystallography and Egyptian geometry together would give him the notion of a world built up of material bodies in the form of regular geometrical solids.

This is an attractive idea, though of course it cannot be proved. In antiquity the numerical view of the universe was more commonly connected with the Pythagorean interest in music. Pythagoras was thought to have been the first to discover that certain musical intervals regarded by Greek musicians as fundamental could be expressed in terms of numerical proportion. Thus the ratio 1: 2 gives the octave, 3: 2 the fifth and 4: 3 the fourth. It is uncertain whether Pythagoras knew these figures to represent (as they do) the rates of vibration of a string, but he could have determined them by using strings of different lengths, since the rate of vibration is inversely proportional to the length of the string.

This musical discovery was given a universal and cosmic significance, most strikingly illustrated by the strange and beautiful notion of the harmony of the spheres. As described by Aristotle, this theory was that moving bodies of the size of the stars must necessarily make a sound, that the intervals between the spheres carrying the fixed stars, planets, sun and moon correspond mathematically to the ratios between concordant notes of the musical



scale, and that therefore the sound must be harmonious. The fact that we ourselves do not hear it the Pythagoreans explained by saying that awareness of sound depends on contrasting intervals of silence. We naturally do not perceive a sound which has been going on continuously since before we were born.

I have said that in Greek eyes the notions of order and beauty were very closely conjoined, and in this double preoccupation of the Pythagoreans with music and mathematics we have a remarkable instance of their conjunction. Let me add now that just as in this word *cosmos* two ideas are combined which we do not necessarily associate ourselves, so in another key-word of Greek thought, the word *kalon*, we have another important and characteristic association of ideas. *Kalon* is commonly translated 'beautiful', but apart from the fact that this is, as Dr Seltman has called it, 'the most ill-defined and indefinite word in the (English) language', *kalon* just as frequently means 'good'. Its field of meaning is wider than that of any corresponding English word, though the one which comes nearest to it is 'fine'. Let me quote Dr Seltman further. In his book *Approach to Greek Art* he writes (p. 29):

The Greeks, whose thinking was both clear and simple, had no such confused concepts as Beauty and the Beautiful . . . Beautiful is a misleading rendering of *kalos*. We can perhaps get nearest to the meaning by using Fine and Fineness, for these may be employed in most of the senses of the Greek words. To say that for the Greeks Beauty and Goodness were one and the same is an error. But put it, that to the Greeks Fineness automatically included excellence, because what is fine must be fitted to its purpose and therefore good, and we are on the right track. *To kalon* or Fineness could become the ultimate Value by which all other Values could be measured.

These words introduce us to a new element in a complex of ideas which to the Greek mind were inseparable, and fundamental to its whole outlook: that is, the notion of fitness for purpose. The Pythagoreans equated limit with goodness, and in this it is fair to regard them as typically Greek. 'Nothing too much' and 'observe limit' were two of the precepts carved on the walls of the temple at Delphi, the common central shrine of all Greece and the home of the most typically Hellenic god Apollo. Nothing indeterminate, nothing excessive, nothing sprawling or misshapen could be good or beautiful. The whole universe, being not only beautiful and comprehensible (that was their faith) but also visibly fulfilling its functions with regularity and propriety—night following day and season season in unfailing repetition—must also be a complete and



limited whole. It could not be infinite. Everything, in nature as well as in human art, has a function to perform, and its function provides the key to its structure and organization.

This point, that proper performance of function depends on a thing being a limited whole composed of parts properly organized and ordered, is best made by Plato. He leads his readers from perceiving this truth in artificial objects and bodily organs to apply it to moral goodness—which is, in his language, the fitness of the human soul to perform its own proper function. The function of a thing he defines (*Rep.* 352) as the work which it alone can do, or can do better than anything else. This for an eye is seeing, for an ear hearing, for a pruning-knife pruning. No doubt you *could* cut vine-shoots with a carving-knife or a chisel, but with nothing so well as a pruning-knife made for the purpose.

Now when a man wants to make something for a particular purpose, what is it he actually does? He takes an unspecified quantity of material and imposes on it a certain form or organization. 'Look', says Plato (*Gorg.* 503d Jowett), 'at the painter, the builder, the shipwright, any craftsman you like; see how he disposes all things in order, and compels the one part to harmonize and accord with the other part, until he has constructed a regular and systematic whole; and this is true of all artists, and in the same way the trainers and physicians . . . give order and regularity to the body.'

The house, the ship, or the human body in which order and regularity prevail is good, that in which there is disorder is evil. He then proceeds to apply this principle to the soul, showing that it too has parts or aspects which may exhibit good order or the reverse. These parts are such things as intellect, courage, desire. None must be repressed entirely, but in the good soul—that is, the soul best constructed to fulfil the unique and proper function of a human being—they will be brought into their proper order and due subordination of one to the other; and I need hardly add that for the Greek it is reason or intellect that is to be in supreme control and direct the activities of the rest of the *psyche*.

On the Greek view, then, we find in the universe and nature, that is, in the macrocosm, certain ruling principles which must be observed also in the microcosm, in artistic and other human activity, if we are to achieve the best results. These principles include the following related ideas: a proper function for each specific thing, and consequently a specific excellence or efficiency in performing that function; this excellence depending on its being a limited and properly organized whole composed of parts put together in the right relation to each other. On the achievement

of this order will follow not only goodness or efficiency but also beauty, for the one word *kalon*, applied to such a perfectly formed entity, covers both at once. I need hardly remind you how perfectly this principle finds its expression in the highest achievements of Greek art. When you look at the Parthenon, or an early fifth-century statue, or the shape of a Greek vase and the composition of its decoration, or equally the structure of a tragedy, it leaps to the eye. I am only concerned to point out how these art-forms, which we vaguely sum up in the word 'classical', are the product of certain deeply-rooted and universal tendencies of the Greek mind.

But I cannot resist mentioning a parallel which suggests that this has indeed been a legacy to later, and perhaps particularly to English art. In his recent Reith lectures, Professor Pevsner enlarged on what he termed the reasonableness of English art, and to illustrate it he quoted the opening of Hogarth's *Analysis of Beauty*, which is so strikingly parallel to the argument of Plato, even to the choice of shipbuilding as an analogy, that I may be excused for reminding you of it (*Listener* 10 Nov. 1955, p. 783). Hogarth starts like this: 'Fitness of the parts to the design for which every individual thing is formed, either by art or nature, is first to be considered, as it is of the greatest consequence to the beauty of the whole.'

After illustrating this by the size and shape of chairs, pillars and arches, he goes on: 'In shipbuilding, the dimensions of every part are confined and regulated by fitness for sailing. When a vessel sails well, the sailors . . . call her a beauty: the two ideas have such a connexion.'

Nothing could be more Greek.

The Greek legacy, then, is first and foremost a legacy of rationalism. One could hardly ask for a more valuable one, and our present age has surely seen enough of the evils attendant on the flight from reason to convince us that a return to the Greeks would be a decidedly wise move. What they offer above all is a sense of scale, an immediate realisation when something is out of scale and an intuitive revulsion from it as ugly and wrong. It would not have surprised them that men should invent machines in which they can fly through the air at a speed beyond that of sound. One thinks of the wonderful chorus on man in the *Antigone* of Sophocles. 'There are many strange and wondrous things in the world,' say the chorus, 'but none more strange and wonderful than man.' They recount his achievements to date—sailing the sea in ships, taming the animals, ploughing the earth, defying the elements, speech and statecraft and medicine—and they continue: 'Never doth he meet the future unprovided . . . Of subtlety passing belief

are the arts and devices that lead him, it may be to good, or perchance to evil.' No, the Greek would not doubt the possibility of flight at seven hundred miles an hour, but he would seriously question its wisdom, for it is so obviously out of scale with the natural faculties and activities of the human race. And when he saw that while we spent our money like water to enable the few to hurtle through the air like this, neglect of our roads was causing ordinary traffic—some of it the life-blood of our trade and thus of our livelihood—to silt up and grow slower and slower, his astonishment might lead him to doubt our sanity. Our technology would seem to him to have lost its sense of scale, knocked lopsided by the disease of 'too-muchness'. A Hitler above all they would have described as a *perissos aner*, literally a 'too-much man', and would have turned with disgust from the pseudo-philosophy of 'blood and earth'. In the destruction which he caused, and his final downfall and sordid end, they would have seen the familiar and inevitable sequence of power leading to *hybris*, successful *hybris* to more *hybris*, and this to an inescapable doom.

Fortunately we in England have both a natural sympathy for the Greek outlook and a direct tradition of Hellenism in education which, at least until recently, has preserved much of that outlook in our own. But this particular form of education has become something for the few, and although the newer subjects of science and technology also owe more than they are sometimes aware of to the Greek colouring which they have retained from their Renaissance origin, they are not always taught with sufficient understanding of the assumptions as to the nature and purpose of thinking in which they have their roots. You will therefore forgive me if it is to the merits of the Greek legacy that I particularly wish to draw attention.

At the same time, much harm has been inflicted on its reputation, harm done mostly in the nineteenth century but showing its effects in the reactions of our own, by misguided attempts to represent everything Greek as perfection. The Greeks were not more perfect than other men, and it will be interesting as well as salutary to mention one or two of the shortcomings of the mentality that I have been describing. Consider first this passage on the Greek sense of form from Arthur Lane's book (p. 11) on Greek pottery:

Form can be arrived at by empirical methods, as a happy accident supervening on the experimental manipulation of a material; or it may be a concept in the mind, that struggles into tangible shape through whatever channels it can. Their literature, philosophy and art show that the conceptual attitude to form



was more deeply ingrained in the Greeks than in any other people of whom we know. To judge from the 'geometrical' decoration of their early pottery, they might at that time have been totally blind to the surrounding world of natural phenomena. It was impossible for them to perceive an object, and then fluently translate this percept into a representational work of art. After perception came the agonizing process of creating the concept; what the early concept of 'man' looked like, we can see on a 'geometric' vase.

This conceptualism, as Lane remarks, is a characteristic of Greek literature and philosophy as much as art. It was their fate to see the world of nature not directly, but as it were at one remove, transmuted by the pattern-forming habit of their own minds. Geometrically perfect crystals are not the only forms in nature, nor does the occurrence of night and day, summer and winter, exhaust the range of natural phenomena. The Greeks indeed took the great step forward of removing the more alarming and unpredictable events of nature, like thunderstorms, earthquakes and cloudbursts, from the hands of capricious or vengeful deities, and tried to fit them into their systems of natural causes: but they were never so happy with the irregularities as with the regularities of nature, and it was on the latter that they relied in forming their boldly rationalistic schemes of cosmology. It is well known that in the classical period they were sadly lacking on the experimental side. They did not so much invite and encourage nature to reveal her secrets as arrogantly impose upon her the magnificent constructions of their own intellects. 'Reality is one', they said, or 'The world obeys a law of reciprocal justice', or 'Like is known by like'. The universe to them was spherical and the paths of the planets were perfect circles. Why? Because the sphere is the perfect shape and the stars and planets are the highest form of material existence. It could not be otherwise. So persistent was this bit of their legacy that even Copernicus could not abolish the planetary spheres, although his own ingenuity had made them superfluous. Even after Kepler some people tried to explain the new elliptical path of the planets in terms of a combination of circular motions.

This habit of giving first place to the intellectual idea, and subordinating the claims of observation to it, reached its climax at an early stage, when in the first half of the fifth century B.C. Parmenides calmly declared that the whole world of experience was illusion, because its characteristics of movement and change could not be explained in a way to satisfy the intellect. 'I cannot understand them, therefore they do not exist' is a breathtaking assertion

of confidence in the powers of the human reason. Sight and hearing, touch and taste are liars, he said. Trust nothing but the mind. It is no wonder that the people which produced such a man were slow to progress in experimental science. Hypothesis, it is true, is always a necessary adjunct to experiment, but some of the Greek hypotheses were more like acts of faith.

There is certainly a lesson in this for today, because in spite of our hypothetical and experimental methods, neither scientists nor philosophers have outgrown the habit of first constructing a model of how they suppose the universe to work, and then forcing the facts to fit it. The demand that nature, or history, shall conform to a preconceived pattern is one with which we are all familiar.

A different danger lay in the Greek predilection for the finite. It is obviously all to the good to choose moderation and condemn excess, to follow reason and be suspicious of the irrational heights of enthusiasm and passion. The elements of order, system and pattern make for a better life than their opposites. But as the Greeks were fully conscious, to form one's ideal on these lines is to bind oneself also to the idea of a limit and end to one's endeavour. The Greek emphasis on function was what we call teleological, from the Greek word *telos* meaning an end or final aim. Everything for them had its proper *telos*, and this not only meant that its natural and proper activity is to strive to reach that *telos*—as the seed presses towards its flowering, the babe to manhood, and the artist to the perfect expression of an intelligible form—but also that once reached, this *telos* can never be passed. It is a commonplace to contrast the formal, mathematical perfection and limited aspirations of a Greek temple with the soaring and often untidy magnificence of a Gothic cathedral, just as the ordered beauty of the sculpture decorating the one is at the opposite pole from the wild exuberance of carving that often erupts on the other. But it is as good an illustration as any of the difference between the spirit of Greece and that of medieval Christianity.

Now listen to a modern art-critic on the subject of Greek sculpture. 'The weakness, to me', writes Eric Newton, 'of the whole theory of Greek sculpture is that it was pursuing an end that was attainable. Beyond a certain point nothing more could be done. It was heading, along a difficult and fascinating road, straight for a cul-de-sac. It took three and a half centuries to reach the end, and having reached it, it was bound to perish, not as other schools of painting and sculpture have perished, from a slackening of tension in the artist's own vision, but because it had literally accomplished all it set out to do. It had attained perfection, the most dangerous thing that a human being can attain, for perfection brings im-

mobility and immobility implies death . . . My contention is merely that Greek art, by excluding from its province what is known as the human soul, set itself a task that could be, and was, completely and perfectly accomplished. It headed all the time for a point well within human reach, and the journey to that point was more interesting than the arrival.'

A Greek might have tried to defend his practice, but he could not disown the truth of what Mr Newton says, for Greek writers, particularly Aristotle, say the same thing. Taking sculpture as his example, the English critic says: 'Beyond a certain point nothing more could be done.' Greek sculpture came to an end 'because it had literally accomplished all it set out to do'. Set beside this what Aristotle said of tragedy in the *Poetics* (1449a5): 'Beginning from mere improvisation, it gradually advanced by men developing each new element as it came to light. Then after undergoing a series of changes it stopped, because it had attained its proper nature.'

'Nature' is the word used by Aristotle to signify that fixed goal of development to which all natural creatures tend. When the seed has become a plant that has flowered and borne fruit, when the foal has become a full-grown stallion, it can go no further. The rest is decay and death. By a rigid application of this analogy to human art, Aristotle cheerfully relegates the advent of a Shakespeare to the realm of the impossible. Either he could not exist, or what he wrote was not tragedy, for tragedy reached its final form in the fifth century B.C.

We may well feel that there is something lacking in an ideal attainable on this earth within a fixed period of human endeavour. We miss the spark of divine discontent, the spur of knowing that the end is never here and now and perfection must ever elude us, because it is not of this world. Occasionally a painter or sculptor or poet may be granted a moment of vision which he may so capture by his art that we too, if we are worthy, can share the glimpse of something beyond; but if he does, the communication of his vision will be something independent of the formal perfection of his art.

If this is our feeling, we may like to know that in spite of the humanism of Greek art and the naturalism of Aristotle's philosophy, we do not nevertheless have to go beyond the classical Greek world to find expression given to this dissatisfaction. The philosophy of Plato was based on mathematics, and he has insisted more than any other Greek on the need for due proportion, order and organization in the life of individual and community. But there was more to his philosophy than that. His cavalier treatment of the poetry and art of his time has often been held against him as



exhibiting an aesthetic insensitiveness and a moral priggishness surprising in one whose every page shows him to have been something of a poet himself. But what, I think, he chiefly disliked was the apparent unawareness of so many Greek artists that perfect form is not to be attained in this world. Plato was a thorough Greek in that he equated perfection of form with perfection of being and of goodness, but he saw the perfect forms of things as something quite outside the sphere of everyday experience. They are, in his own words, 'patterns laid up in heaven', to which we must approximate as closely as we can, but of which we can only have full knowledge when death has freed us from the clogging and bemusing weight of bodily existence. The soul is immortal, there is a beyond, and only there are the true forms of things to be found in perfection. I cannot launch out now into an exposition of Plato's doctrine of the Forms (or theory of Ideas as it is commonly known), but I could not do him the injustice of leaving you with the impression that there was not even one Greek thinker who saw beyond this world and looked for finality only in another.

If I had time, I might enlarge also on the dangers lurking in the Greek passion for order when it is translated from the study of the cosmos and of nature into the world of political life. The political side of Plato's own work is frequently marred by what seems to us a too rigid insistence on system and subordination at the expense of the more precious ideal of liberty. These after all are matters in which even a philosopher is more at the mercy of his temporal situation. Plato had not only been spared our direct acquaintance with the evils of totalitarian systems, but he had been born into the world's first and most extreme democracy. The Athenians had rightly prided themselves on their devotion to freedom, and particularly to freedom of speech; so much so that many might say that if I wanted to bring home to you the typically Greek ideal, it is of freedom that I should have been speaking. But Plato knew it after the time of its finest flowering. Democracy at Athens was in the hands of lesser men for whom liberty meant licence. They had led her to utter defeat, and in the series of revolutions which followed that disaster the democracy had some unpleasant actions to answer for by the time that Plato took up his pen. To him the evils of democracy in its late fifth and early fourth century form seemed patently to demand a return to a more orderly and authoritarian regime.

Fortunately his *Republic* is not wholly, or even primarily, the outline of a political system. Plato put into it the whole of his philosophy, and it is rather, as someone has recently described it, 'a dramatically disguised essay on the true, the good and the

beautiful'. We can afford to reject its time-bound aspects and concentrate on the timeless truths which make the *Republic* one of the most precious objects in all the Greek legacy. Even on the political and social side, we who still enjoy a fair amount of liberty might well pause to consider whether it is an end in itself. If we proclaim our policy as the preservation of liberty against totalitarian threats, Plato, I fancy, would answer: 'Good so far as it goes. But liberty means being free to do what you like, does it not? What then, possessing this liberty, are you going to do?' The challenge is worth pondering. The search to give the best possible positive content to our lives leads beyond liberty to a consideration of yet other spiritual values, and in this search we can still find much to help us, whether by way of example or of warning, in the legacy of Greece.

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## DIDEROT'S *JACQUES LE FATALISTE*: ART AND NECESSITY

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DURING HIS mature years Diderot never wavered in his acceptance of determinism. If some critics, themselves finding this particular belief unpalatable, have attempted to present Diderot's thought in this regard as basically contradictory<sup>1</sup> or as evolving towards some sort of 'humanism'<sup>2</sup> (in actual fact, a very muddled notion), it is simply that they have failed to distinguish Diderot's moments of intellectual honesty and his moments of emotional effusion provoked by such concepts as 'virtue' and 'human dignity'. Diderot himself has very clearly defined his position and has done this in the work on which the 'humanist' critics place most reliance, namely, *La Réfutation suivie de l'ouvrage d'Helvétius intitulé 'L'Homme'* (1774):

Dans l'homme qui réfléchit, enchaînement nécessaire d'idées; dans l'homme attaché à telle ou telle profession, enchaînement nécessaire de telles ou telles idées. Dans l'homme qui agit, enchaînement d'incidents dont le plus insignifiant est aussi con-

traint que le lever du soleil. Double nécessité propre à l'individu, destinée ourdie depuis l'origine des temps jusqu'au moment où je suis; et c'est l'oubli momentané de ces principes dont on est imbu qui parsème un ouvrage de contradictions. On est fataliste, et à chaque instant on pense, on parle, on écrit comme si l'on persévérât dans le préjugé de la liberté, préjugé dont on a été bercé, qui a institué la langue vulgaire qu'on a balbutiée et dont on continue de se servir, sans s'apercevoir qu'elle ne convient plus à nos opinions. On est devenu philosophe dans ses systèmes et l'on reste peuple dans son propos.<sup>3</sup>

Vernière in his monumental *Spinoza et la pensée française avant la Révolution*, (Paris, 1954, II, p. 611), would seem to be the first to point out the importance of this passage. It disposes very adequately of the difficulties raised by the oft-quoted commentary on Helvétius' proposition, *sentir, c'est juger*,<sup>4</sup> in which Diderot appears to deny the materialism of the *Rêve de d'Alembert* and to return to traditional dualism. Diderot not only states very clearly what are his intellectual beliefs, but also offers a very plausible explanation on psychological grounds for the occasions on which he contradicts these beliefs. Quite obviously Helvétius' horrifying over-simplifications had so irritated Diderot that all the old 'préjugés' of his youth, the notions perhaps acquired in his schooling with the Jesuits, welled up in his mind and burst forth in the paragraph written to demolish Helvétius' crude proposition. These contradictions between his deterministic materialism and his 'humanism' result, as Diderot says himself, from emotional excitement or linguistic habit; it is idle and unprofitable to reconcile them logically by verbal prestidigitation, a favourite but most depressing occupation of some of his commentators. Diderot's own texts are still the surest guides to a knowledge of his ethical attitudes.

Nevertheless, for all that Diderot's intellect never rejected the doctrine of necessity, it is certain that he rarely ever propounded it with joy and enthusiasm. There is the famous remark in the letter to Sophie Volland: 'J'enrage d'être empêtré d'une diable de philosophie que mon esprit ne peut s'empêcher d'approuver, et mon coeur de démentir';<sup>5</sup> there is his fear, at least twice expressed, that if he did undertake his long cherished ambition to prove that virtue is rewarded by the universal order his arguments would only lead to the conclusion that vice goes unpunished;<sup>6</sup> finally there is the curiously apologetic tone with which he always treats the theme of determinism, as if treading the edge of abysses.

These attitudes are natural enough; if, on one hand, Denis the philosopher is prepared to follow his arguments fearlessly to their



ultimate consequences, many of the latter go quite contrary to the upbringing, the experience, the hopes of Diderot, the sensitive soul. Despite the Bohemian years, despite the marriage without consent, Diderot is very much the son of Didier Diderot, master cutler of Langres, a man of substance and principles, and, if one can believe the portrait his son has left of him, (in *Entretien d'un père avec ses enfants*), a singularly fine example of French middle class virtues; despite his nostalgia for Tahiti, despite the consolations he gave himself for Antoinette's shrewishness, Diderot is no Rameau and is desperately afraid that Rameau's moral anarchy will spread. Then, too, he is the defender of the dignity of the human individual against the weakening tyranny of Church and State; he is not a little disturbed that his determinism reduces the autonomy of the individual to zero, not only before social institutions but before the entire universe. For, whilst the materialistic lover of Sophie Volland can burst out lyrically at the idea that aeons hence their immortal molecules may by some secret affinity come together again in one being,<sup>7</sup> the same materialist is very definitely chilled at the thought that in this strictly necessary universe he could not *not* love his Sophie.<sup>8</sup>

Diderot never succeeded in reconciling the demands of his intellect with his middle class common sense and his 'âme sensible'. The argument that good must come in the long run of accepting the consequences of determinism, however demoralizing the immediate effects may be, is no solution, but merely a pious hope.<sup>9</sup> All this is hardly surprising, since the ethical problems raised by determinism would seem still to exercise the minds of professional philosophers today;<sup>10</sup> small wonder that Diderot failed to find his way out of the paradoxes, contradictions, anomalies in which he had become involved.

It is, however, curious and well worth noting that in three compositions which bear partly or wholly on determinism, Diderot does treat the subject without awkwardness, embarrassment, irritation. In the first work, the letter to Paul Landois (dated 29 June 1756, but perhaps never sent), the general tone is serene and Spinoza-like. One is inclined to think that Diderot had recently been in contact with the *Ethics*. However, Diderot was much too fiery a particle to wear for long the serenity of the lens-polisher of the Hague. The tone of the Landois letter is never re-captured.

The other two works in question, *Le Neveu de Rameau* and *Jacques le fataliste*, matured in Diderot's mind during the 1760's, and certainly the bulk of *Le Neveu de Rameau* was written during that decade. Each one reflects Diderot's difficulties with determinism; 'Moi', in the *Neveu*, the defender of 'virtue', has a hard

time of it combating 'Lui's' cynicism: Jacques, the hero of the other work, is forever bemoaning his inability to imitate the serenity of his captain, and by extension of Spinoza.<sup>11</sup> But the Diderot who composes *Le Neveu de Rameau* and *Jacques le fataliste* is not identical with 'Moi' who argues ineffectually with 'Lui', nor with the Jacques whose philosophy cannot stand the test of the hangman's horse. This Diderot, unlike his fictional projections, accepts quite joyfully the world with its chain of causality, necessary, continuous, universal. This is not because he has in these two works resolved the contradictions that have beset and will continue to beset him in his letters and purely critical works like the *Réfutation d'Helvétius*: it is simply that these contradictions have ceased to matter. Why?

Fabre is the first to have pointed out the reason for this. In the introduction to his critical edition of *Le Neveu de Rameau* he writes:<sup>12</sup>

Il y avait, au fond de lui, une autre assurance de liberté que le vœu formulé par 'une âme sensible': cette assurance, il ne la pouvait trouver que dans son génie d'écrivain . . .

And further:

L'anarchie de Rameau fait place nette . . . Mais dans ce désastre de valeurs, l'art seul se trouve préservé et exalté par le dévouement absolu et l'échec même de Rameau.

This is indeed implicit in *Le Neveu de Rameau* and one can only congratulate Fabre for having described so eloquently the exaltation inherent in the 'satire'. It is, however, unfortunate that Fabre should consider *Le Neveu de Rameau* unique in this as well as other regards, that among other works he should dismiss *Jacques le fataliste* as marred by didacticism and ideological *parti pris*.<sup>13</sup> This much maligned novel, almost always profoundly irritating on first reading but improving infinitely upon acquaintance, is in fact marked by the same assurance, the same exaltation as is to be found in *Le Neveu de Rameau*. Fabre is quite wrong in giving the latter a unique place in Diderot's work. Surely if there is to be a hierarchy, *Jacques le fataliste* and *Le Rêve de d'Alembert* must be placed alongside it on an equal footing; all three are the fruits of the autumns spent at Grandval, without which Diderot would hardly have been more than a successful journalist and editor.

Moreover, the nature of Diderot's exaltation, of his sense of total freedom is much more apparent in *Jacques le fataliste* than in *Le Neveu de Rameau*. In the later novel he sees much more clearly why art can survive the 'désastre de valeurs' provoked by Rameau.

why the act of artistic creation can free him from his servitude to necessity. This is most clearly evident in the earlier pages of *Jacques le fataliste*, where Diderot's pair, the master and Jacques, are still puppets in a philosophical tale, where Diderot, the author, is still very much present and pre-occupied with the ethical problem of determinism and the aesthetic problem of the nature of invention. The two problems are closely related for Diderot at this stage of the work and illuminate each other. Thus we find repeatedly in the early episodes of the novel passages which can be reduced to the following pattern: (a) the relation of an event which is '*écrit là-haut*', (b) a conditional phrase where the author enumerates all the possible consequences which he could give the preceding event, (c) the dismissal of these possibilities by the statement that in fact such and such happened. One example may suffice.<sup>14</sup>

Voilà le maître dans une colère terrible et tombant à grands coups de fouet sur son valet; et le pauvre diable disant à chaque coup: '*Celui-là était apparemment encore écrit là-haut.*'

Vous voyez, lecteur, que je suis en beau chemin, et *qu'il ne tiendrait qu'à moi* de vous faire attendre un an, deux ans, trois ans, le récit des amours de Jacques, en le séparant de son maître et en leur faisant courir à chacun tous les hasards *qu'il me plairait*. Qu'est-ce qui m'empêcherait de marier le maître et de le faire cocu? d'embarquer Jacques pour les îles? d'y conduire son maître? de les ramener tous les deux en France sur le même vaisseau? Qu'il est facile de faire des contes! Mais ils en seront quittes l'un et l'autre pour une mauvaise nuit, et vous pour ce délai. (no italics in original)

Clearly in this and the other similar passages Diderot is fascinated by the very act of writing, by the very act of reading, by the whole complex writer-text-reader. But he is at the same time intoxicated by a sense of 'freedom'; for everything that happens in the novel happens not because it is written in advance 'up above', but because Diderot, the writer, chooses that it shall happen. And though he seems playfully to abandon the total freedom he claims as a creator ('*il ne tiendrait qu'à moi . . .*') in order to submit himself to '*la vérité, la vérité!*', he finds this 'truth' within himself, within the possibilities offered by his own imagination. Indeed, on occasion, he will affirm his own liberty in this regard by making over to the reader the right of choosing what shall be 'true'. Where shall Jacques and his master have spent the second night? Where you will, reader. (Here the absurdity is double, the reader being given the choice on pp. 514-515 of the Garnier edition of the *Oeuvres romanesques*, only to find that the right has been withdrawn on



p. 518 where the author decides that they will have spent the night at Conches.) In short, though the 'grand rouleau' of the real world may have been written for all eternity by Someone or No one, the 'grand rouleau' of the imaginary world of *Jacques le fataliste* is written by Denis Diderot; he is the lord of that universe, he, not blind Necessity, is the master of its possibilities, he, like the gods of Olympus, in Homer's world, orders and controls its events.

Small wonder that during the moment of creation, during the evocation of Jacques' and his master's journey and all its concomitants in space and time (the hostess and her tale of Mme de la Pommeraye and so on), during the evocation of the conversation with Rameau in the Palais Royal, no mere record of a real conversation, Diderot felt delivered from Necessity, or rather felt so intoxicated by his own creative act that Necessity weighed very lightly upon him. Yet even the Olympians were subject to Moira, and Diderot in his turn never ceased to realize that the sense of deliverance given by the creative act was in the end only an intoxication, something utterly irrational and having no intellectual justification. For all that Diderot claims that the truth of a work of art must come from within the artist, cannot merely be based on a representation of some part of the necessary external world,<sup>15</sup> nevertheless he knows that the work of art must have some necessary relationship with the external world, must be judged by some terms of reference in that world. Otherwise we shall be engulfed, as indeed we have been engulfed since the Romantic movement, by rubbish like *Cléland*:<sup>16</sup>

. . . Mais cela aurait pué le *Cléland* à infecter. La vérité, la vérité!—La vérité, me direz-vous, est souvent froide, commune et plate; par exemple, votre dernier récit du pansement de Jacques est vrai, mais qu'y a-t-il d'intéressant? Rien.—D'accord.—S'il faut être vrai, c'est comme Molière, Regnard, Richardson, Sedaine; la vérité a ses côtés piquants, qu'on saisit quand on a du génie.

But if one lacks this genius for extracting the significant details from the chaos of reality, one will in fact be in the position of the poet from Pondicherry whose curious life is forthwith narrated. Diderot gives here the impression that he is introducing a mere digression, and asks in false innocence: 'Mais, lecteur, quel rapport cela a-t-il avec le voyage de Jacques le fataliste et son maître?' It is in fact nothing less than the ultimate word on one of the key themes of the novel, the nature of the creative act. Just as the poet from Pondicherry cannot but write reams of verse which is unacceptable to men of taste, so others cannot but write verse which

enraptures men of taste. The wind blows where it lists. Each artist is doomed to do what he does, to find in himself significant truths or platitudinous truths or no truth at all, like poor Prévost in *Cléveland*. Diderot, for all his sense of deliverance in writing *Jacques le fataliste*, can no more *not* write it than Gide's Lafcadio can free himself by his idiotic 'acte gratuit'. Yet despite all this the intoxication and the rapture are unspoilt and endure for Diderot . . . and for us.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> e.g. Paul Hazard: *La Pensée européenne au dix-huitième siècle*, Paris, 1946, II, pp. 146 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. (i) J. Thomas: *L'Humanisme de Diderot*, Paris, 1938.

(ii) L. G. Crocker: *Two Diderot Studies*, Baltimore, 1952, I, pp. 31 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> *Oeuvres complètes* de Diderot, éd. Assézat et Tourneux, II, p. 373.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.* II, pp. 300 et seq.

<sup>5</sup> *Lettres à Sophie Volland*, éd. Babelon, Paris, II, p. 274.

<sup>6</sup> (i) *Correspondance* éd. Roth, Paris, 1956, II, p. 107.

(ii) *Oeuvres complètes*, II, p. 345.

<sup>7</sup> *Correspondance*, II, p. 284.

<sup>8</sup> v. note 5 *supra*.

<sup>9</sup> cf. *Le Rêve de d'Alembert* in *Oeuvres philosophiques*, Classiques Garnier, pp. 365-6.

<sup>10</sup> cf. P. Nowell-Smith: *Ethics*, London, 1954, pp. 270 et seq.

<sup>11</sup> *Oeuvres romanesques*, Classiques Garnier, p. 671. Diderot is surely not laughing at Spinoza in the figure of Jacques, as Crocker, Vernière and others claim, but rather laughing at himself for his own inability to escape from human bondage.

<sup>12</sup> *Le Neveu de Rameau*, éd. J. Fabre, Genève, Droz, 1948, (Textes littéraires français) pp. LXXVI et seq.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.* p. XLIV.

<sup>14</sup> *Oeuvres romanesques*, Classiques Garnier, p. 495. Cf. also p. 846 (the surgeon and the peasant), pp. 498-499 (discussion of fatalism), pp. 504-505 (the crowd armed with poles), p. 514 (the probable lodging place of the two travellers), p. 526 (the conversation of the surgeon and the peasant couple).

<sup>15</sup> v. Diderot: *Les Salons*, ed. Sez nec and Adhémar, I, p. 24.

<sup>16</sup> *Oeuvres romanesques*, pp. 526-527.

# WISSANT AND THE EMPIRE OF CHARLES THE SIMPLE

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THE OXFORD manuscript of the *Chanson de Roland*, in the well-known passage detailing the events in France which presage the death of Roland, defines as follows the area where an earthquake causes the collapse of houses:

*De seint Michel de Paris josqu'as Seinz,  
Des Besençon tresqu'as de Guitsand.* (1428-9)

These lines<sup>1</sup> are commonly amended to read:

*De seint Michel del Peril josqu'as Seinz,  
Des Besençon tresqu'as porz de Guitsand.*

Discussion of them has centred on two questions: the identification of the place-names, and the precise nature of the area they define.

*Seint Michel* is generally accepted to be the Mont Saint-Michel (Manche), and Madame Rita Lejeune's attempt to identify it with the Pyrenean village of Saint-Michel, on the pilgrimage route to Compostella, has won few, if any, advocates.<sup>2</sup> *Les Seinz* has provided the greatest scope for controversy, but Xanten, near Düsseldorf in Westphalia, is usually accepted by editors, admittedly without any overwhelming conviction.<sup>3</sup> *Besençon* and *Guitsand* (*Wissant, Pas-de-Calais*) have posed no problem.

The major thesis put forward concerning the area defined by the four places was advanced by Ferdinand Lot<sup>4</sup> thirty years ago, and has been strongly supported since then by Professor Fawtier and M. E. Mireaux.<sup>5</sup> According to this explanation, the area outlined by the Mont Saint-Michel, Xanten, Besançon and Wissant is the old Neustria and Austrasia ruled over by Charles the Simple in the early tenth century, and considered by all the last Carolingian rulers to be their true domain. The argument is supported by the references in the *Roland* to both Laon (1.2910) and Aix (1.435.3706) as Charlemagne's capital: Aix was his main seat, but Laon played no such role until the tenth century, when both towns were important Carolingian centres and Laon was, from 936 to 987, the official royal capital.<sup>6</sup> The conclusion drawn is that this section of the poem goes back to the tenth century. Later writers<sup>7</sup> have pointed out that, while the explanation proposed is reasonable, the conclusion does not necessarily follow: rather than an archaic survival,



the description may be a deliberate attempt by the author at providing an historical setting for the action.

Another explanation has been proposed by Professor Migliorini,<sup>8</sup> who suggests that the area defined by the Mont Saint-Michel, Saintes, Besançon and Wissant coincides, with fair accuracy, with that of the *langue d'oïl*. Apart from the doubtful identification of Saintes,<sup>9</sup> this theory is questionable on the additional ground that it is most unlikely that the author of the *Roland* would have had such an appreciation of the linguistic situation of his time. It is, however, only fair to point out that while the Mont Saint-Michel, Besançon and Wissant were used in Old French texts as reference points in describing areas for various purposes,<sup>10</sup> the same use is not found for Xanten.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, similar examples using Saintes are quoted only for Old Provençal literature,<sup>12</sup> and not for Old French.

One aspect of the general problem of these two lines which has received little attention is the date of appearance of the place names involved: it is a question which has considerable bearing on the problem of characterising the area they define.

The question of chronology was first raised by Madame Lejeune in relation to *Seint Michel*. The abbey at the Mont was set up in the tenth century by Richard I of Normandy (943-996)—also mentioned in the *Roland*—on the site of an oratory dating from 708. It is not clearly named Saint-Michel-du-Péril-de(-la)-Mer in any documents before 1150, but Professor Delbouille<sup>13</sup> favours accepting as valid a possible earlier use of the name by Dudo of St Quentin (1015-1020).<sup>14</sup> Even this date, which is as early as existing evidence allows the name to be taken back, is too late to justify the tenth century archaism of Lot's theory. There is, however, a reasonable possibility that the full name was applied to the oratory before the abbey was built: Michael was almost the official imperial saint in the time of Charlemagne,<sup>15</sup> and also at the Mont the danger of the tide must have been apparent very early. The chronological question cannot therefore be conclusively answered in relation to *Seint Michel*.

*Les Seinz* has been variously identified as Sens, Cologne, Saint-Maixent, Xanten, Saintes, or one of the Sains<sup>16</sup> in the departments of Aisne, Nord, Pas-de-Calais, Seine-et-Marne (Saints), Yonne. These names can all be definitely or probably dated before 900, and cannot therefore affect one's view of the two lines in question. The same is true of *Besançon*.

The position is totally different with *Wissant*, for the chronology of its replacement of Quentavic as chief port on the narrow

northern Channel, and of its own decline with the rise of Calais, is reasonably well known:<sup>17</sup>

It was apparently formed by a breach made by the sea in the dunes that protected the coast.<sup>18</sup> The small region thus submerged provided a safe anchorage from the storms of the Channel, and at the spot where the Rieu de Herlen reached the sea the port of Wissant grew up. One can date its appearance with fair accuracy as the middle of the tenth century, for Wissant was situated in the parish of Sombres,<sup>19</sup> and in the Itinerary of Archbishop Sigeric (990) the landing-place was still known by the name of the parent village (*Sumeran*) and not by that of the recently-formed harbour;<sup>20</sup> Wissant itself does not appear by name in a contemporary document till the second half of the eleventh century.<sup>21</sup>

The nature of this 'first' reference is of interest. Hariulf wrote his *Chronicle* about 1088, and revised it in 1104; referring to the second year of the reign of William the Conqueror, therefore to the year 1068, he writes:

Anno regni ejus II. venerabilis Gervinus, illa quae superius meminimus praedia visurus, ad maris ingressum properavit, quem nominant plebeiales Guizant; (. . .).

The name is therefore still popular in character over a century after the formation of the port; in fact it does not seem ever to have been dressed up in a Latinized form.

There are, however, other references testifying to earlier uses of the name.<sup>22</sup> H. Gröhler quotes,<sup>23</sup> unfortunately without giving any source, '*Whitsand* 1048, *Witsand* 11. Jhdt.'. The latter reference is probably to the eleventh-century *Vita S. Vulganii*, where *Witsand* appears.<sup>24</sup> He also quotes an undated explanation of the name which is almost certainly that given in the early thirteenth-century *Historia* of Lambert d'Ardres.<sup>25</sup> The earliest mention therefore appears to be the unidentified text of 1048. The earliest French text using the name is the *Roland*.<sup>26</sup>

No final conclusion can be drawn from these dates: they well illustrate the length of time required for a popular name to be accepted in a very conservative literary language. It appears, however, that the port had little real importance until 'its position was enhanced in the eleventh and twelfth centuries by the rising commercial importance of Saint-Omer and Arras'.<sup>27</sup> This, together with its late appearance as a port—about 950—means that it could not have served as a reference point in any contemporary description of the empire of Charles the Simple between the creation of that

empire in 911 and his death in 929.<sup>28</sup> In fact, the evidence would indicate rather that Wissant would hardly be used for such a purpose before the eleventh or twelfth centuries, in other words before the likely time of composition of the *Roland* as we know it.

The description given in lines 1428-29 cannot therefore be regarded as an archaism surviving from an earlier stage of the poem or from some other earlier work. If we are to interpret the area outlined as that ruled over by Charles the Simple, the only possible explanation is that it represents a deliberate attempt by the author to provide historical background, as is probably also the case with the mention of Aix and Laon, and of the bow (1.767).<sup>29</sup> and with the archaic features of Ganelon's *plaid*.<sup>30</sup>

The fact that these features were not all historically contemporary with each other or with Charlemagne, although made out to be so by the author of the *Roland*, is of little consequence. Many a modern historical novelist, with far greater reference resources at his disposal than were available in the eleventh or twelfth centuries, has made equivalent, and indeed worse, errors. It must not, however, be forgotten—as it seems to be occasionally by the opponents of the ‘historians’—that acceptance of such an explanation does mean that the author of the *Roland* deliberately consulted sources, including without any doubt many which have not been preserved. The case for the existence of traditions—whatever their form, however distorted or augmented by learned and/or popular fancy—which provided the necessary link between the events of 778 and the *Chanson de Roland* is in fact strengthened rather than weakened by the removal of this particular ‘archaism’.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> These two lines are missing altogether from V<sup>4</sup> and n; C<sup>1</sup>V<sup>7</sup> both mention only *seint Michel* and *Wissant* (in mutilated form: *Egricent*, *Egrecent*); PT both have *Besançon* and *Wissant*, *saint Michiel* and *Rains*, while L has only the last pair.

<sup>2</sup> R. Lejeune, *Recherches sur le thème: les chansons de geste et l'histoire* (Liège, 1948), pp. 213-247; cf. J. Horrent, *La Chanson de Roland dans les littératures française et espagnole au moyen âge* (Paris, 1951) pp. 300-301, 306 n. 1; M. Delbouille, *Sur la genèse de la Chanson de Roland* (Bruxelles, 1954) pp. 77-81.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. B. Migliorini, *Noterella rolandiana* (*O 1428 iosqu'as Seinz*), in *Studi medievali* 9(1936), 181-187, in particular p. 182.

<sup>4</sup> *Etudes sur les légendes épiques françaises, V: La Chanson de Roland*, in *Romania* 54(1928), esp. pp. 374-375.

<sup>5</sup> R. Fawtier, *La Chanson de Roland, étude historique* (Paris, 1933), pp. 192-196; E. Mireaux, *La Chanson de Roland et l'histoire de France* (Paris, 1943), pp. 115-116.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. M. Bloch, *La société féodale*, t. 1 (Paris, 1939), p. 157.



<sup>7</sup> Horrent, *op.cit.* pp. 300-301; Delbouille, *op.cit.* p. 79.

<sup>8</sup> *Art.cit.* pp. 186-187.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Romania* 68 (1944), p. 233; Delbouille *op.cit.* pp. 78-79.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. E. Langlois, *Table des noms propres de toute nature compris dans les chansons de geste imprimées* (Paris, 1904); Migliorini, *art.cit.* p. 186, n.4; Delbouille, *op.cit.* p. 79.

<sup>11</sup> This fact is glided over by Prof. Delbouille (*op.cit.* p. 78): "... il est établi que Wissant et sans doute Xanten au nord, mais, en tout cas, plus au sud, Besançon et le Mont Saint-Michel sont des points de repère traditionnels."

<sup>12</sup> See Migliorini, *art.cit.* pp. 185-6.

<sup>13</sup> *Op.cit.* p. 81.

<sup>14</sup> 'In periculo maris monte ecclesia posita est Archangeli Michaelis Paradisi praepositi nomine praetitulata' (quoted and rejected as evidence of use as a place-name by Madame Lejeune *op.cit.* p. 222).

<sup>15</sup> See O. Rojdestvensky, *Le culte de Saint Michel et le moyen âge latin* (Paris, 1922), pp. 26-35.

<sup>16</sup> See H. Gröhler, *Über Ursprung und Bedeutung der frz. Ortsnamen*, II (Heidelberg, 1933), pp. 396-397; A. Dauzat, *Les noms de lieux* (Paris, 1947), p. 150; for Xanten, see A. Bach, *Deutsche Namenkunde*, Bd. II, 2 (Heidelberg, 1954), §495 (pp. 195-196).

<sup>17</sup> P. Grierson, *The Relations between England and Flanders before the Norman Conquest*, in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, (4th series) 23 (1941), pp. 71-112. The passage quoted is on p. 80, and the foot-notes are Mr Grierson's also (notes 20 and 21 have been abridged).

<sup>18</sup> A. Briquet, *Le littoral du nord de la France et son évolution morphologique* (Paris, 1930) pp. 268-270.

<sup>19</sup> D. Haigheré, *Etude sur le Portus Itius de Jules César* (Paris, 1862) pp. 29-30.

<sup>20</sup> W. Stubbs, *Memorials of St. Dunstan* (Rolls Series) pp. 392-395.

<sup>21</sup> Hariulf, *Chronique de l'abbaye de Saint-Riquier* (ed. F. Lot, Paris, 1894) p. 241.

<sup>22</sup> 'Wissant is mentioned by English and Norman writers of the twelfth century when referring to events of 933, 1036, and 1051, but in each of these cases, Wissant is probably no more than a guess on the part of the historian' (Grierson, *art.cit.*, p. 80, n. 5). Wissant has also been identified with *Guisum* in the later tenth-century *Annales* of Flodoard (ed. P. Lauer, p. 69) and the *Historia of Richer* (ed. R. Latouche, t. 1, p. 140); but Guines and Quentovic have also been suggested, and modern opinion favours the last-mentioned (cf. Grierson, p. 79, n. 3).

<sup>23</sup> *Op.cit.* p. 270, n. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted by Grierson, p. 80, n. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Gröhler *loc.cit.*; Grierson, *loc.cit.*

<sup>26</sup> See E. Langlois, *op.cit.* s.vv. *Guisant*, *Guitsand*, *Huiscent*, *Wissant*. The usage with reference to 1036, mentioned in n.22 above, is in Wace's *Rou.*

<sup>27</sup> Grierson, p. 81.

<sup>28</sup> It was the creation of the duchy of Normandy and the annexation of Lorraine which gave the empire of Charles the Simple the extent necessary to equate it with the description given in the *Roland*. Cf. A. Fliche, *L'Europe occidentale de 888 à 1125* (Paris 1941), p. 77.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Fawtier *op.cit.*, pp. 202-206; Mireaux, *op.cit.*, pp. 116-117; Horrent, *op.cit.*, p. 261.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. R. M. Ruggieri, *Il processo de Gano* (Florence 1936); P. Le Gentil, *La Chanson de Roland* (Paris, 1955) p. 30.

# POINT OF VIEW IN THE NOVELS OF THOMAS MANN

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ONE OF THE most striking features of the novel of the present century has been the attempt by many serious novelists to eliminate the narrator and the obtrusive author and thus to achieve direct representation rather than the traditional narrative report. This attempt to refine the artist out of existence has its origin in the novels and theories of Flaubert, Zola and Henry James; it has, however, been taken further in the twentieth century than ever before, especially in that turning inward of the modern novel that is seen most clearly in the work of the stream of consciousness authors. Most critical studies of the modern novel written since 1930 have drawn attention to this elimination of the author. To some critics, like J. W. Beach,<sup>1</sup> this has been the positive achievement of the modern novel: to others, like Wolfgang Kayser,<sup>2</sup> it has been the cause of the crisis of the modern novel, for in Kayser's view 'the death of the narrator is the death of the novel'. Whatever may be said for or against this elimination of the narrator, it is interesting to observe that one of the major novelists of the twentieth century, namely Thomas Mann, has moved in his novels in the opposite direction: instead of trying to eliminate the narrator, he has given ever greater prominence to the personal narrator.

In a famous passage in the first chapter of *Der Erwählte* Mann describes how the bells of Rome rang for three days before the entry of Gregory into the city. He then asks:

Wer läutet die Glocken? . . . Wird man sagen, dass niemand sie läutet? Nein . . . Wer also läutet die Glocken Roms?—Der Geist der Erzählung . . . So geistig ist dieser Geist und so abstrakt, dass grammatisch nur in der dritten Person von ihm die Rede sein und es lediglich heissen kann: 'Er ist's'. Und doch kann er sich zusammenziehen zur Person, nämlich zur ersten, und sich verkörpern in jemandem, der in dieser spricht und spricht: 'Ich bin es. Ich bin der Geist der Erzählung . . . !'<sup>3</sup>

The mere existence of this passage, plus many related passages in earlier works, suggests that Mann was preoccupied with the problem of the narrator and that the choice of point of view in each novel was certainly a conscious, carefully considered process. The development in Mann's novels is from an abstract, barely

perceptible 'Geist der Erzählung' to incarnations of this spirit who write in the first person. To use the terminology of Franz Stanzel,<sup>4</sup> Mann passed from 'der personale Roman' through 'der auktoriale Roman' to the 'Ich-Roman', or, in the terminology of Norman Friedman,<sup>5</sup> he passes from 'neutral omniscience' through 'editorial omniscience' to 'I as witness' and 'I as protagonist'.

Let us consider this development in some detail.

#### THE PERIOD OF NEUTRAL OMNISCIENCE

*Buddenbrooks* (1901) is a novel of neutral omniscience. This means that the author adopts any point of view at will: he may show a scene through the eyes of one or more characters, he may show the scene as it might appear to an eye-witness, he may merely report the scene. He may stand outside a character and report his ideas and emotions or he may endeavour to represent them directly as experienced. The one thing he does not do is intrude into the story and comment in the first person on what he has written. The author is constantly there as an omniscient 'Geist der Erzählung', but this spirit never becomes incarnate or even articulate.

In this use of neutral omniscience Mann is following the example of many of the great novelists of the nineteenth century: Zola, Stifter in *Witiko*, Keller in *Martin Salander*, and many others. It is also the pattern that is still followed to-day by a great many novelists.

#### THE TRANSITION FROM NEUTRAL OMNISCIENCE TO EDITORIAL OMNISCIENCE

Mann's second novel, *Königliche Hoheit* (1909), already shows a movement away from the strictly preserved neutral omniscience of *Buddenbrooks*. Basically the technique remains that of neutral omniscience: there is no question of a single limited perspective, nor does the author at any point intrude into and comment on his story. And yet, from the very beginning, the reader is conscious of some difference in point of view as compared with *Buddenbrooks*. It is as though the author had assumed the identity of a citizen of the little state in which the story is set, albeit an omniscient citizen. This becomes specific about half-way through the book (p. 133 of the Fischer-Bücherei edition). Here the author suddenly talks of Spoelmann's 'Aufenthalt bei uns', and from this point on phrases like 'bei uns', 'unsere Presse', 'unsere Öffentlichkeit' occur frequently. When the first person plural had been used authorially in *Buddenbrooks*, it had occurred only in generalizations (as on p. 37



and p. 59 of vol. 2): i.e. the author speaking in the first person had identified himself with mankind as a whole. In *Königliche Hoheit*, however, the first person used authorially identifies the author with a limited group: the inhabitants of a petty state. The 'Geist der Erzählung' is in the process of incarnation: a very shadowy personal narrator—an unidentified member of a limited group—has emerged. It is striking, however, that Mann seems at this stage consciously to keep the figure of the narrator as vague as possible. Although we spoke above of Mann's use of the first person, he does not at any point use 'wir'. The first person occurs, but only in the oblique cases of the pronoun and in the possessive adjective. Where constructions with 'wir' would seem in place, the author uses 'man'. It is as though the author feared that the use of the first-person pronoun in the nominative case would bring the narrator too much into the foreground.

#### THE PERIOD OF EDITORIAL OMNISCIENCE

To the period of editorial omniscience belong *Der Zauberberg* (1924) and the four novels that comprise *Joseph und seine Brüder* (1933-1943). It is in this period that Mann achieves what is often regarded as the typical Mann tone: an ironic, yet chattily intimate tone. Fritz Martini<sup>6</sup> says of *Der Zauberberg*: 'Mann plaudert mit ironischer, lässiger Breite, scheinbar willkürlich, dennoch mit reifer Kunst'. A major factor in creating this intimate tone is Mann's use of editorial omniscience, which is basically the same use of point of view as in *Buddenbrooks* (neutral omniscience), plus intrusions by the author in the first person. Editorial omniscience is not, of course, a new technique: in German it had been used constantly by Jean Paul. But in Mann's work the authorial intrusions are less frequent, more subtle and less arbitrary than those of Jean Paul.

Mann's new tone of editorial omniscience is struck in the opening words of *Der Zauberberg*: 'Die Geschichte Hans Castorps, die wir erzählen wollen . . .', and in the same sentence 'der Leser' is brought in. Throughout the book the author then frequently chats directly with the reader, usually concerning the nature of time. These chats are mostly interpolations, occurring at the beginning of sections or, like 'Strandspaziergang', which is the longest excursus on time, forming a complete section in themselves. In between Mann tells the story of Hans Castorp and the other inhabitants of the magic mountain in virtually the same way as he tells the story of the Buddenbrooks (i.e. neutral omniscience), but with the one great difference that he constantly introduces words and phrases

that remind the reader of the author's presence: 'wie wir wissen', 'unter uns gesagt', 'unser schlichter Held' etc.

The same technique is then applied throughout the Joseph novels. As in *Der Zauberberg* the pattern is that of straight narrative interspersed with excursions in the first person plural, but again with constant use within the straight narrative of phrases that remind the reader of the author's presence. The author's chats with the reader are now largely concerned with the nature of myth and the formation of myth: i.e. they are more directly related to the subject-matter and theme of the work itself than are the equivalent passages in *Der Zauberberg*. They are also frequently more ironic, since Mann uses these passages to 'correct' the biblical story. In addition Mann now discusses with the reader to a greater extent than in *Der Zauberberg* such problems as the nature of narration and the role of the story-teller in narration. There is in *Joseph in Aegypten* a most illuminating passage in which Mann discusses his own technique of editorial omniscience (p. 184). Mann asks in effect: is it in keeping with the nature of narration that a story-teller should stand outside his story and comment on it, as he himself does? Should he not be in the story, an anonymous source, and not outside it? And the answer is that the story-teller is like the God of Abraham, in the fire and yet outside the fire. 'Der Erzähler ist zwar in der Geschichte, aber er ist nicht die Geschichte; er ist ihr Raum, aber sie nicht der seine, sondern er ist auch ausser ihr, und durch eine Wendung seines Wesens setzt er sich in die Lage, sie zu erörtern.' Such a passage indicates an important difference between the authorial intrusions in *Der Zauberberg* and those in *Joseph und seine Brüder*: in the latter the act of narration, the process of creation, becomes part of the texture of the work itself.

In all of Mann's novels of editorial omniscience there is no longer any doubt about 'who rings the bells'. The 'Geist der Erzählung' has not yet contracted into a living character within the work, but it has acquired a voice: the voice of the author. And this voice mediates between the events narrated and the reader. It is most appropriate that this mediation should be so apparent in the Joseph novels, in which the concept of the mediator plays so important a part.

#### THE PERIOD OF THE FIRST-PERSON NOVELS

It is an easy step from editorial omniscience to first-person narration: from the author who intrudes into his own story to the story-teller who is himself a character in the story. Mann takes this

step with *Dr Faustus* (1947) and continues to make use of first-person narrators in the following novels. However, there are substantial differences between the parts played by these narrators in the three novels. The point of view in *Dr Faustus* is what Friedman calls 'I as witness': i.e. the story is told by a secondary character who knows the hero well and is familiar with the events narrated. It could be called a first-person biographical novel. The point of view in Mann's last novel, *Felix Krull* (1954), is what Friedman calls 'I as protagonist': i.e. the hero tells his own story. This work belongs to the tradition of the picaresque novel and the novel autobiographical of the narrator (such as Keller's *Der grüne Heinrich*). *Der Erwählte* (1951), the novel that comes between *Dr Faustus* and *Felix Krull*, does not belong to any of the standard categories of first-person novel. The point of view might well be termed 'I as chronicler': i.e. the narrator is one who has no personal connection whatsoever with the action and merely retells an old story. It is a most unusual narrative device and quite different from the 'chronicle story', which will mostly use the first-person only in the framework to the story proper. In *Der Erwählte* the narrator intrudes frequently into his own story, just as the author himself had done in the novels of editorial omniscience.

Despite these differences in the perspective of the narrators with regard to other characters there is none the less a striking similarity of tone in these three first-person novels. This similarity of tone arises from the similarity of perspective of all three narrators with regard to their own stories. All three novels are what Stanzel calls 'Ich-Romane mit dargestelltem Erzählakt'. All make use of the double time-plane that is always available in first-person narration (the narrator's present and the past of the events narrated), and much of the process of composition, the act of narration, is included in the works themselves. The narrator's present is most fully developed in *Dr Faustus*, where the fictive author's writing of the work is made to coincide in time with the last years of the Second World War, so that events such as the allied invasion of Normandy form part of the narrator's present. In all three novels the representation of the act of narration plays a major part. Both Serenus Zeitblom (in *Dr Faustus*) and Felix Krull express doubts about their adequacy for the literary tasks that confront them: the monk Clemens (in *Der Erwählte*) analyses the 'Seelenkonflikte' that the narrator experiences at certain gripping points of his own story (p. 168): Zeitblom worries whether chapters are too long (e.g. p. 35): Felix Krull discusses the suitability of a particular episode for rounding off not merely a chapter but a whole book (p. 215), and the examples could be extended to dozens.



In the effect produced these three first-person novels are much closer to Mann's novels of editorial omniscience than to *Buddenbrooks* and *Königliche Hoheit*. As is made explicit in *Der Erwählte*, the 'Geist der Erzählung', which had gained a voice in the novels of editorial omniscience, has now gained a body. It has contracted to a clearly defined figure, a character in his own narrative, both 'erlebendes Ich' and 'erzählendes Ich', and one of whose presence the reader is particularly conscious because of the marked stress on the 'narrating I'.

#### THE TWO DEVIATIONS FROM THE BASIC LINE OF DEVELOPMENT

While the general pattern of the development of point of view in Mann's work is as represented above, we have left out of account two works that are obvious deviations from this line of development: the first version of *Felix Krull*, published as a fragment in 1923, and the novel *Lotte in Weimar* (1939). Chronologically *Felix Krull* (I) comes between *Königliche Hoheit* and *Der Zauberberg*, and *Lotte in Weimar* comes between *Joseph in Aegypten* and *Joseph der Ernährer*. In other words, the two deviations from the basic line of development occur at the beginning and near the end of Mann's middle period, the period of editorial omniscience. It is as though Mann had experimented with techniques before finding the intimate 'Plauderton' of the middle period and before abandoning that tone in favour of first-person narration. The first version of *Felix Krull* is, like the second version, a first-person novel with 'I as protagonist' and representation of the act of narration. It is striking that Mann was not able at this time to complete more than a portion of the novel. The difficulty lay, not in the material, but in the method of presentation he had chosen. Manifestly Mann was not yet ready for this type of narration, and he made no effort to return to this form in any major work for some twenty-five years.

*Lotte in Weimar* has no parallel amongst Mann's works. In point of view it is no doubt closer to *Buddenbrooks* than to anything else, but the differences are still substantial. The neutral omniscience of *Buddenbrooks* gives way to what, in Friedman's terminology, could best be described as a combination of 'the dramatic mode' and 'selective omniscience'. But whatever labels may be applied to the work, the important feature is that *Lotte in Weimar* is the only novel of Mann's in which he attempts to refine the artist out of existence: the only novel that is almost completely lacking in mediated narration. The greater part of the work consists of direct conversation about Goethe, and, when Goethe himself appears, insight into his mind and personality are given in Mann's only

attempt at sustained interior monologue. It is scarcely necessary to point out that direct conversation and interior monologue are the two most immediate, most obviously unmediated forms of representation possible in the novel. In other words, *Lotte in Weimar* stands alone in Mann's work as the one novel in which he attempts, not narration, but direct representation. And few would deny that *Lotte in Weimar* is easily Mann's weakest novel, the only novel that could justifiably be described as consistently dull. It is not surprising that immediately after *Lotte in Weimar* Mann should have returned to his editorial omniscience in *Joseph der Ernährer* and then passed on to first-person narration.

So we see that, apart from two unsuccessful experiments at the beginning and towards the end of the period of editorial omniscience, the development of point of view in Mann's work has been from neutral omniscience to the personal narrator. This inevitably has meant some loss of immediacy and some sacrifice of the illusion of reality in the novels after *Königliche Hoheit*. In all the novels of editorial omniscience the figure of the author stands between the reader and the events narrated. In the first-person novels the narrative distance is even more marked, for here there is not only the intervening figure of the fictive author, but also the fictive author's stress on his own present and on the process of narration, which must inevitably increase the distance between the reader and the past events narrated. Yet these losses are offset by substantial gains: e.g. the intimacy of tone achieved by the direct contact between the author or fictive author and the reader, the limitless opportunities for irony contained in the author's discussion of his own work, the extension of the range of the work of art when the process of creation ostensibly becomes part of the work itself.

Despite his debt to Naturalism, it is clear that nothing could be further removed from Naturalist theory than Mann's use of point of view in all works after *Königliche Hoheit*. For Mann the novel is not impersonal photography of reality. Few authors have been more aware than Mann of the essentially mediated nature of true narrative, and no one since Sterne, Jean Paul and Raabe has so skilfully made this mediation a part of his work. If, as Wolfgang Kayser claims, the death of the narrator is the death of the novel, then no one has done more than Mann to ensure the survival of the genre.

All references to Mann's novels are to the 'Stockholmer Gesamtausgabe' unless otherwise stated.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> J. W. Beach: *The Twentieth Century Novel*, New York, Century, 1932.

<sup>2</sup> Wolfgang Kayser: *Entstehung und Krise des modernen Romans*, Stuttgart, J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1955.

<sup>3</sup> Mann makes great play with 'Der Geist der Erzählung' in *Der Erwählte*, but the concept does occur in his earlier work: almost at the end of *Der Zauberberg* (p. 624 of vol. 2 of first edition) and in *Joseph in Aegypten*, p. 472.

<sup>4</sup> Franz Stanzel: *Die typischen Erzählsituationen im Roman*, Vienna, Braumüller, 1955.

<sup>5</sup> Norman Friedman: *Point of View in Fiction*, PMLA, Vol. 70, Dec. 1955.

<sup>6</sup> Fritz Martini: *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte*, Stuttgart, Kröner, 1955, p. 495.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

NATURE AND THE SUPERNATURAL IN *THE ANCIENT MARINER*.  
H. W. Piper. (Inaugural Lecture). *University of New England*, 1957.

Professor Piper's aim is to show that *The Ancient Mariner* is more than 'a miraculous example of the poetry of the supernatural', and that it is in fact 'one of the first great expressions of a new way of looking at the world'. This new attitude he finds typical of the English Romantic poets and based on 'the belief that the universe was a unity'. In Coleridge's particular case the source of this new vision was Unitarianism, a faith, as Professor Piper explains, both religious and quasi-scientific.

This pantheistic conception of divine immanence he shows us clearly enough at work in the turgid poems of the young Coleridge; he has a harder task to convince us that it is in any way basic to the unheralded magic of *The Ancient Mariner*, even conceding that the prime source of that poem's power is what he calls 'a new imaginative view of the world and of man's place in it'. Professor Piper is wise to limit his claims by admitting that the new vision was something 'which his theories did no more than suggest', and that, if 'in *The Ancient Mariner* the old material of his earlier poems is used . . . it is transformed.'

This being the case, an enquiry into *The Ancient Mariner* conducted along these lines is not likely to lead to any very central comment upon it. Whatever it is that makes *The Rime* a wonderful poem, it is not what it owes, at whatever remove, to Erasmus Darwin and Joseph Priestley, even if they did help Coleridge to formulate his conception of 'a world in which natural forces . . . work . . . towards purposes which are not physical but moral'. And although I believe that Wordsworth made Coleridge a poet, I cannot see that he influenced his poetry significantly; Coleridge took the moral of *The Ancient Mariner* from *Lines left upon a Seat* no doubt, but the less said about that the better. No, such explanation as is possible in these cases is surely most likely to be found in that 'early reading of fairy tales and genii etc. etc.' to which Coleridge refers in the 1797 letter from which Professor Piper quotes. My *Ancient Mariner* owes more to 'romances and



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relations of giants and magicians and genii' than to Unitarian pantheism.

Professor Piper's learned exposition of the poem's 'scheme of ideas' is nevertheless valuable and interesting, a *tour de force* in fact in view of the necessary limitations a single inaugural lecture imposes. It was perhaps inevitable that he should seem to force the pace a little at times, as on the mysterious wind and the revived sailors.

The University of New England, not to be complimented on its choice of misprinter, is to be congratulated on having had the opportunity of hearing what is so fascinating to read. Its Foundation Professor of English has done admirably what he intended to do, to make 'a contribution . . . to the subject and . . . give some hint of the relations that that subject has with other fields of knowledge.'

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F. M. TODD

THE LADDER OF PERFECTION. Walter Hilton. *London, Penguin Books.* 1957. pp. 256.

Walter Hilton, an Augustinian canon of Thurgarton in Nottinghamshire, was one of the most influential English mystical writers of the fourteenth century. *The Scale of Perfection*, as it is generally known, his celebrated treatise on prayer and contemplation, is extant in about fifty manuscripts, testifying to its contemporary popularity, and it has been reprinted many times, from Wynkyn de Worde's edition of 1494 to Evelyn Underhill's partly modernized edition of 1923. Penguin Classics are to be congratulated on making so widely available Leo Sherley-Price's felicitous translation of this work. It is not the first rendering into completely modern English. In 1953, Dom Gerard Sitwell, O.S.B., issued such a translation, which has not only the advantage of detailed notes, but, in my view, lets more of the colour of the original through than does this new version.

To take a sample sentence: Mr Sherley-Price's 'Since you have forsaken the world and turned wholly to God, you are symbolically dead in the eyes of men' is, in Dom Sitwell's translation, 'You have forsaken the world, turning to our Lord, and are as it were dead in the sight of men', which, for all the slightness of the differences, is actually closer to Hilton's manner. However, for the general reader, the Penguin edition is admirable, removing archaisms and obsolete words, while retaining much of the plainness and colloquial vigour of the original.

*The Ladder of Perfection* was originally written for the guidance of an anchoress, but one of its most important features is its presentation of the idea that contemplation is not an esoteric exercise for a few initiates, but simply the manifestation of a special degree of holiness capable of at least partial attainment by everyone. Hilton places particular emphasis upon a knowledge of God through an awareness of sanctifying grace in the soul, and upon the importance of prayer as a means to grace. He treats, too, of mortification, but of spiritual mortification, the overcoming of vice, rather than of physical mortification, since, like the other English devotional writers, he distrusts excessive asceticism.

Although parts of this book may not be readily accepted by modern readers unacquainted with mediaeval ideas—the continual allegorical use of Scripture and the uncompromising attitude towards heretics and infidels, for instance—its homely yet profound wisdom, its good sense, its charity, and its sympathetic understanding of human weaknesses make it an exception-

ally attractive work. In our time, it has to offer to the Christian reader wise counsel which has not been blunted by six centuries, and to others, the revelation of a kindly, understanding man who wrote sweet, lucid English of a particularly durable kind.

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J. C. REID

THE COLLECTED POEMS OF ROY CAMPBELL, Volume 2, London, The Bodley Head, 1957.

Among poets writing in English in this country, Roy Campbell holds a somewhat equivocal place. Where does he really belong? His native home was South Africa, his spiritual home the Catholic Spanish peninsula; a romantic by temperament, he most admired classical models and traditional forms. Energy—an enormous physical zest for living, and for the force of language in action—seems to have been his strongest characteristic, both as man and poet. He found little to admire in England and the English; yet his very best poetry (one might argue) is not liberated in any Celtic or Antipodean rhapsody, but in a rather grumpy Anglo-Saxon mood of stubborn endurance that is as old as *The Seafarer* and *Beowulf*.

Only the middle-aged will now remember the first impact of *The Flaming Terrapin* and *Adamastor*, the intoxicating freshness of that vigorous youthful verse in the etiolated literary world of Prufrock and Bloomsbury. Yet in the 'thirties much of Roy Campbell's energy was used up in friction, in furious combat with current literary fashions, with the political Left, with his own problem of literary and social rootlessness. By the end of the 'forties he had fought in three wars and taken a good many knocks; he turned, with mixed success, to translation, and found a final home in Portugal. Shortly before his death last year, he had completed the revision of this second volume of his Collected Poems: a third and final volume is still to come.

The poems in this second volume show Campbell at his best, and at his worst. An extract from a long early African poem *The Golden Shower* (the bulk of it perished at sea in 1926) has an Elizabethan freedom of movement and imagery, and makes more eloquently the same general statement some Australasian poets were making about the same time, or a little later. A couple of charming short pieces record moments from horse-and-cattle days in the Camargue. But then we are into the Spanish Civil War. Political passions cloud the view, coarsen and clog the verse; occasional brief passages of soaring rhetoric fail to redeem the insistent, monotonous, vituperative hymn of hate. One cannot, as with Byron, regard these slashing manifestoes with any kind of detachment: I imagine that few who shared Campbell's general attitude and outlook during this period can now read *A Letter from the San Mateo Front*, or even that monstrous 'epic', *Flowering Rifle*, with anything but disgust.

What saves this volume, however, is the short group of poems from the Second World War. Sergeant Campbell of the King's African Rifles was a wiser man and a better poet than the laureate of The Falange and the satirist of 'Joint MacSpaunday'. *One Transport Lost*, *The Sphinx and the Soldier*, *Monologue*, *Auguries*, seem to me among the strongest and best of war poems in our language. They place Campbell, not unworthily, in the line of Wyatt, Raleigh, Godolphin, and Wilfred Owen. And the finest of

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his sonnets salutes, with true humility, the poet to whom he is perhaps closest of all—Camoens.

Victoria University of Wellington

JAMES BERTRAM

THE YEAR'S WORK IN ENGLISH STUDIES, vol. XXXVI, 1955. Ed. Beatrice White for the English Association, Oxford, 1957. pp. 254.

*The Year's Work in English Studies*, produced by the English Association, has the traditional merit of being a critical bibliography. This makes it a convenient work of reference for those who wish to gain a general impression of the contribution made to the various branches of literary and linguistic study in the relevant year, and who feel the need of expert advice in selecting the more significant sources.

For more exacting purposes it has severe limitations. It does not cast its net as widely as does its rival, the Modern Humanities Research Association's *Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature*, although of course it is now six years ahead of the latter publication, the last volume of which only brings it up to 1949. Furthermore, it does not list reviews of books mentioned and, most serious of all, it perpetuates the lamentable change made in the 1954 volume, when the editors decided to omit precise periodical references. It is of little help to be told that an article on Romantic poetry appeared in *Notes and Queries* during the year; any scholar might have suspected as much, and is saved no labour by having his suspicion confirmed, nor, might one add, by being supplied with a short critical comment on it by however respectable an authority. At least the 1955 volume does include the dates of some *Times Literary Supplement* references (though not, for example, those of the two front-page articles mentioned on pages 155 and 161) which were not given at all in 1954.

*The Year's Work* is then a tool for the student rather than for the scholar. It does not give the impression of cold efficiency which characterizes the *Annual Bibliography*, and one uses it with misgivings. I suspect its index, by the way. Professor Horsman's edition of *Dobson's Drie Bobbes*, for example, is indexed only under the editor's name.

University of Tasmania

F. M. TODD

SPOKEN ENGLISH. A. G. Mitchell. London, Macmillan, 1957. pp. 238.

The development of phonetic theory has probably so far had a more beneficial effect on the teaching of Modern Languages than on the teaching of English. But in both cases the chief shortcoming in its application has been insufficient attention to the existing sounds in the speech of the pupils taught. It is useless to explain to a class that French *tout* has a sound like that of English *too* if this class pronounces *too* rather nearer to a French *tu*, as some speakers in New Zealand seem to do. It is equally useless to try to tell Australian and New Zealand children that the *a* sound in *father* is a back sound, or, in many cases, that it is different from the first element of the diphthong in *my*. Professor Mitchell's account of the sounds of English speech with special awareness throughout



of the sounds of Australian English will leave teachers without excuse for such shortcomings.

The book is a general guide to the practical phonetics of English, describing the organs of speech, discussing the vowels, diphthongs and consonants individually and their combination and going on to variations of stress, rhythm and intonation. There is practical emphasis in a section on variant pronunciations and another which gives suggestions for Australian teachers. This last section is equally applicable to New Zealand. There are phonetic transcriptions, and a gramophone record illustrating certain sounds (indicated in the text) is available from the Department of English, University of Sydney.

The general plan and treatment of this very necessary work command our praise. The exposition is clear and will be followed by any intelligent reader interested in the subject. No specialist knowledge of phonetic theory is required in the reader, though it has clearly guided the author throughout.

It is only in small details that adverse criticism can be made. There are occasional misprints among which the inclusion of [z] among voiceless sounds on p. 23 might confuse very inexperienced readers, who will be among the users of this book of non-specialist appeal. Even more advanced readers may be a little puzzled to find non-significant degrees of length differentiated in apparently broad phonetic transcriptions. Because the material in the book is very well arranged the lack of an index is not particularly felt, though a reader may wish to refer again to some definitions (e.g. 'assimilation') or interesting asides (e.g. a note on the pronunciation of Australian place names) which are not easily traced without it.

These complaints are small enough. The book will do much to improve awareness of the sounds of language. Since a great deal of public money is spent in Australia and New Zealand in endeavours to influence speech sounds in officially approved directions, the importance of an accurate survey of our speech, accessible to the general reader, hardly needs emphasis.

University of Canterbury

G. W. TURNER

THE PATTERN OF ENGLISH. G. H. Vallins. *London, Penguin Books*, 1957, pp. xi, 168.

The late G. H. Vallins is well known for his books for the general reader on English grammar and usage. Perhaps as much as any writer he has weakened a popular belief that grammar is dull. In this reprint of a book published by Deutsch in 1956 he describes the development of English syntax from Old English to present day English. This is not an easy subject to popularize and there are moments when the tone of the book falters. Though on p. 2 the names of cases (nominative etc.) are defined and explained, on p. 14 we are plunged without preparation into talk of 'weak mutation verbs', 'the fronting influence of *i* and *j*' and a 'dental ending'. This is an extreme example—in general the text will appeal to the reader without special training who is willing to concentrate.

An interesting feature of this book is its frequent reference to the older grammars of Ben Jonson, Priestley, Cobbett and others. The interest is not merely antiquarian; from a study of bygone arbiters of usage there

emerges a theme that rules have constantly changed, that Addison used constructions that would be queried in a student's essay today, that one must not be too dogmatic. Vallins is lenient on contested points of usage, too lenient perhaps when, for instance, he allows the use of a co-ordinating conjunction to connect an adjective clause with a preceding adjective, e.g. '... a common fault with him, and which I have but lately observed in my own writings' (Dryden). Yet here we are shown that Addison, Cobbett (in his *Grammar*), Hazlitt and Trollope use the construction and the objection to it dates back only to Nesfield. Must we retreat to the formula 'If it is not a mistake in grammar, it is an error in style'?

In the older history of the language Vallins is interesting and adequate. One could quarrel with a detail. The accusative and infinitive construction, called 'a late medieval development' (p. 62) was used at least as early as Ælfric's *Colloquy*. It is in the analysis of modern written idiom, for instance in a fine discrimination of the shades of meaning resulting from the use of a comma, that Vallins is outstanding, in this book as in others. There he has the gift of being penetrating and intellectually strenuous without ceasing to be popular and often wittily amusing.

University of Canterbury

G. W. TURNER

FRENCH MASCULINE NOUNS IN -E; THE HISTORICAL APPROACH TO A PROBLEM OF GENDER. A. C. Keys. *Auckland University Press* (Bulletin No. 52, Modern Language Series No. 2), 1957, pp. 56.

The beginner in French has not gone far before he learns from *le livre* that a French word is not necessarily feminine because it ends in -E. Words such as *prince*, *pape*, give him no trouble because of their 'natural gender' (he does not know that *pape* was once feminine!), although this criterion fails him when he meets *la sentinelle*. What a treacherous quicksand French gender seems when he discovers that such obviously feminine-looking words as *incendie*, *lycée*, and *squelette* are masculine! He thereupon tends, or is encouraged by his teacher, to resort to those interminable lists still to be found in grammars and in booklets that call themselves 'French gender at a glance', of noun-endings that indicate masculinity or femininity, together with those lists of 'exceptions' in which the same endings indicate the reverse. He is not altogether unhappy about this for, even at the price of much memorising (and punishment for his memory's lapses), he at least 'knows where he is.' If only all French grammar could be reduced to similarly clear-cut rules and exceptions, why, French might be almost as easy as Latin!

Professor Keys' pamphlet is not addressed to the schoolboy, but presumably (for this is nowhere stated) to the teacher, perhaps also to the University student. It will be useful to more exalted persons too. Its thesis, formulated with wise reservation (p. 16), is that etymology is a surer guide to gender in Modern French than termination. This is an argument that will appeal to the philologically minded (for the schoolboy it merely displaces the problem!), and the good student's appetite will be whetted rather than blunted by the many difficulties that beset its application, difficulties that Professor Keys has scrupulously set forth with an abundance of fascinating examples that reveal the breadth of his erudition.

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As one would expect, the author's philology is thoroughly sound. For the student, however, it is doubtful whether the philological discussion always goes far enough and whether it gives fundamentals their due prominence. If it is necessary to tell him (pp. 11-12) that the -E of *tendre* (masc.) or of *peuple* is a supporting vowel, does he not also need to be told what has happened to bring the internal consonants of *teneru(m)* or *populu(m)* together? Would it not help him to know something of the Gallo-Roman reduction of proparoxytones?

On p. 8 the bare mention of 'the neuter plurals that become feminine singulars in French (FOLIA, *la feuille*)' will probably bewilder the very readers who would otherwise be likely to gain most from Professor Keys' *exposé*. Why, they may ask, should neuters become feminine and, worse still, plurals singular? Is the final -A all that is involved here?

Similarly, the purely synchronic account (p. 16) of the rôle played by the indefinite article in producing current uncertainty of gender in nouns beginning with a vowel calls for a diachronic account of the same phenomenon. Indeed it is doubtful whether any current aberration in the pronunciation of *un* has had as great an effect on gender in standard French as the fact that, until the XV-XVIth century nasalisation of U, *un* and *une* were indistinguishable.

In other words, the basic factors relating to the gender of French nouns of non-learned Latin origin (i.e. the most usual French nouns), except where these have retained their original masculine or feminine gender, are (1) the distribution of Latin neuters, (2) the retention, where necessary, of a final supporting vowel and the confusion of its evolved form with the -E representing the feminine -A(M), (3) the non-fixation by either definite or (in Old and Middle French) indefinite article of the gender of nouns beginning with a vowel, and (4) the interference, at all stages, of analogy. These factors are not neglected by Professor Keys; my grievance is that he has not planted them fair and square as the corner-stones of his rich and complex edifice.

For those who flatter themselves that they did not need the explanatory matter of this pamphlet, its main use may well be that of a repertory. The classified lists of pp. 34-48 are invaluable. I think it a pity that the Index Verborum deliberately omits all the words that appear only in these lists. It would have been useful, and surely not too difficult, to incorporate the material of the lists with that of the alphabetical Index so as to produce an exhaustive check-list of the masculine nouns in -E. Exhaustive? Well, almost. I confess to having taken a perverse delight in hunting through the pamphlet for *aphte*, *cimeterre*, *sigle* and *sylphe* and not finding them. On the other hand, I cannot see in any of the standard dictionaries the *pénicille* of pp. 23, 42, and, on p. 22 'le frigidaire (16th century)' looks like an unexplained pleasantry. (It is the archaeologist's *frigidarium*. Dauzat gives the 20th century *frigidaire* as a resumption of the 16th century French form.) On p. 39 the commoner *interligne* should be added to *entreligne*.

I have detected only two misprints ('denalised', p. 16; 'torre-neuve', p. 39). On p. 17 the reference to Brunot and Bruneau is not given, and in the Short Bibliography, Meyer-Lübke looks as if he had fathered the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie*. I am disconcerted by the use on pp. 22 (l. 2) and 27 (l. 16) of *that* instead of *which* in an appositional relative, and by Professor Keys' curious omission of the comma *before* such incised expressions as 'we estimate' (p. 5), 'as it were' (p. 19), etc.

The use of 'forms' (p.27) instead of 'words' in reference to *aune* ('alder') and *aune* ('ell') is ambiguous; and this leads me to wish that Professor Keys



had done more to dispel the confusion that persists in many schoolbooks between polysemy (with double gender) and homonymy (with identical spelling and with or without difference of gender). This he could have done by dealing with examples of the two phenomena quite separately, instead of mixing, as he does (pp. 26-27), *le/la livre*, *un/une espace*, *le/la mode*, *le/la moule* and *le/la pendule* (in that order) in one paragraph.

Only once in fifty pages of closely-packed information do I find the author's learning at fault: namely, where he says (p. 25) that '*rebelle* clearly contains BELLUM'. BELLUM is surely neither the *immediate* origin of *rebelle* nor the reason of its gender. But, lest Professor Keys should complain that, in making this and the foregoing criticisms, I have churlishly refused to be disarmed by his liminal quotation from Alessio, I hasten to say that I have devoted to his pamphlet the close and careful attention that it richly deserves, for its material dimensions give an altogether inadequate notion of the scope of the research that went to its making.

University of Adelaide

J. G. CORNELL

LE DEVELOPPEMENT DU VOCABULAIRE FEODAL EN FRANCE PENDANT LE HAUT MOYEN AGE (ETUDE SEMANTIQUE). K. J. Hollyman. Geneva, Droz, and Minard, Paris, 1957, pp. 199, including bibliog. and index.

It is regrettable that Mr Paul Canart, just leaving for Europe, has not been available to review this book, published under the auspices of the Société de Publications romanes et françaises. He would, I am sure, have been delighted with it. Dr Hollyman, a senior lecturer at Auckland University, has applied to his subject a method of careful and imaginative investigation that yields rich results. His study is mainly semantic, but necessarily he takes in also certain problems of etymology.

When Latin was built into the structure of feudalism in France, connotations were inevitably altered to suit particular needs; and Dr Hollyman, going carefully through many ancient documents, has patiently tracked down a number of important terms throughout the period of their metamorphoses. What strikes one most, perhaps, is the careless ease with which we attribute to many classical terms a width of connotation that they did not possess. Consequently, I found myself, as I read on, constantly going back to my Lewis and Short to narrow down my earlier semantic assumptions.

One gets quite a jar, for example, on being reminded that *terra* meant in classical Latin only three things. land, in opposition to water; the planet Earth; and a region on the planet. What a pitfall for an undergraduate if he had to translate the title of Pearl Buck's novel, *The Good Earth*! In the feudal period, *terra* came to mean soil, arable land, real estate, etc. (It is true that it had been used in the sense of cultivated land by Quintilian).

After a preliminary section explaining his method, Dr Hollyman takes various categories of nomenclature based on corresponding aspects of feudal society: land and property; lower and upper classes; man (*homo*) as an individual and as a follower (*homo alicuius*); morals. Within these categories he examines the history of the main terms involved. This method gives us some 15 close-ups; and *en passant* we meet a large number of other words, carefully indexed at the end of the volume.

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With such a wealth of matter at our disposal, it is perhaps best to take one key term and look at it closely with Dr Hollyman as our mentor. I choose *fief*, which has often worried me. Here the author necessarily enters the etymological field and, in a way that would have appealed to the late G. G. Nicholson, demolishes a few etymologies that have been too readily accepted, including the Latin *foedus*. One of the early forms tracked down by Dr Hollyman is *feus*. As this gives the genitive *fei*, too many philologists have jumped to the conclusion that the latter is a scribe's mistake for *fidei* (which would conveniently explain the 'd' in *feudum* etc. Attempts have also been made to account for this 'd' by reference to the classical *foedus* and to a conjectural Germanic *fehod*). The word can only have come, Dr Hollyman argues (and demonstrates), from *fehu*. But that leaves a new problem: how could *fehu* (cattle; cf. modern German *Vieh*) come to be used of property in general, including land? Dr Hollyman takes as his starting-point the well-attested sequences found elsewhere: e.g. *pecus*, *pecunia*. The rest is clear and convincing.

The author also disposes easily of our doubts concerning the 'f' in *fief*, explaining it by quotations from texts that give such forms as *feus*, *feuus*, *fefum*, *feufum* and so on.

Another fascinating word is *vassal*, which is discussed at some length. We all knew that it was Celtic, of course, but it was not so easy to see how, after being attached early to a man holding property belonging to another, the word was not prevented by this dependence from acquiring a rather flattering sense. Thus in Old French the vocative of this term is frequently the equivalent, or thereabouts, of our *Sir*; and the diminutive, *vaslet*, always refers to a youth of good family. Moreover, I have noticed that in Gaelic the adjective *uasal* means noble (hence the term *duine uasal*, a gentleman, given a wide currency by Sir Walter Scott, who rather unfortunately quotes it in semi-Sasunnach spelling as *duinhe-wassel*, with a misleading hyphen). But Dr Hollyman shows quite clearly how the associated ideas of benefice and property ennobled the word (pp. 118-122).

Altogether, this is one of the most stimulating philological studies I have read for some time. Philology can too easily become a dryas dust subject. It deserves a better fate; and Dr Hollyman gives it its deserts without indulging in vulgarisation or sacrificing any precious footnotes. His thesis is a work of sound scholarship and a good humanist document.

Melbourne

A. R. CHISHOLM

RONCARD, SA VIE ET SON OEUVRE, nouvelle édition refondue, corrigée et augmentée. Gustave Cohen, Paris, Gallimard, 1956, pp. 303.

For a whole generation of students, Gustave Cohen's book has been the indispensable introduction to Ronsard. First published by Boivin in 1924, re-issued in 1932, it now comes to us from the house of the N.R.F. with an appendix that brings up to date the *bibliographie de base* on its subject. An appendix, yes, but still no index! The French publisher, in general, seems to regard a book of this kind as a piece of literature rather than scholarship, and to consider that, if a reader wishes to use it as a work of reference, it would be good for his soul to make his own index. Human nature, however, and conditions of work being what they are, the unindexed book loses much of its usefulness. In the present instance this is more than usually regrettable, for M. Cohen's *Ronsard*, while enjoyable as a piece of fine

writing to be read consecutively, is also full of facts and appreciations to which one would gladly return as occasion arises. *Messieurs les éditeurs français, nous réclavons des index, encore des index, toujours des index!*

Apart from the appendix and from much new matter in the footnotes, the author has expressly refrained from rewriting his *Ronsard* which thus retains its character as one of the pioneering pieces of interpretation and advocacy in the twentieth century's rediscovery of the Pléiade. Contemporary with Vaganay's edition of Ronsard, as well as with Laumonier's great edition and Chamard's monumental Du Bellay (which, begun in 1914 and 1908 respectively, were still in progress), it coincided in its lectured form (1922) with the four-hundredth anniversary of Du Bellay and, in its printed form (1924), with the four-hundredth anniversary of Ronsard, two events which, as the bibliography abundantly witnesses, fired the train of modern research and criticism, beginning with the authoritative studies of Pierre de Nolhac, Pierre Champion and Marcel Raymond. Since then Ronsard has been the subject of countless papers in the *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, the American journals and various volumes of *Mélanges*. Of all of these, naturally, M. Cohen's book shows, except in footnotes, no trace. But the researches and reassessments of a third of a century would not have modified, save in certain particulars, the framework of his critical edifice.

This edifice abounds in interesting vistas, internal and external. One corridor leads away from Ronsard through Petrarchism to mediaeval courtly love, and in the opposite direction to the cynicism of the fabliaux. Another links Ronsard's disdain of the *profanum vulgus* with, on the one hand, its obvious Horatian prototype and, on the other, the antiphilistinism of the Romantics. Yet another connects Ronsard's lyricism at its simplest and least bookish with that of Verlaine. The windows open onto the surrounding landscape, which is that of the Renaissance and the Reformation. The author has surely explained one of the most puzzling features of the French Renaissance by his formula of 'le dédoublement des âmes'. Recently J. Calvet<sup>1</sup> has shown how Montaigne could be genuinely Christian and yet fully adopt the epicurean ideal simply by keeping religion and life in water-tight compartments. The much debated case of Rabelais (notwithstanding L. Febvre's ingenious thesis) only makes sense in the same way. And M. Cohen shows Ronsard likewise as at once Catholic<sup>2</sup> (but less Christian than traditionalist) and pagan. His dedication of his priestly tonsure to Apollo is piquantly symbolic. (Our author also quotes the poet's promise to *dance* around the images of Saints Gervaise and Protaise; but did not David dance before the Ark of the Lord?) Another characteristic of the Renaissance well defined by M. Cohen is its marriage of inspiration with craftsmanship; and for Ronsard, as for Flaubert, literature is 'l'art des sacrifices'. Different in this from mediaeval art, the Renaissance is seen by Cohen as presenting yet another difference—its individualism: in mediaeval French literature we encounter *genres* with more or less able practitioners in each, in the Renaissance we meet geniuses (e.g. Rabelais, Ronsard, Montaigne) who shape or even create genres in such a way as to remain inimitable, unique.

In developing the uniqueness of Ronsard M. Cohen does not allow his manifest *pietas* to cloud his judgement. The 'most Greek of France's poets' was able to 'transport Humanism from the domain of Erudition to that of Art', but not without pedantry. Although progressively more independent of the Ancients, he continued to clutter much of his poetry with mythological lumber. His philosophy is short-winded. Initiator (in French) of more than half-a-dozen poetic forms, he did not invent a single new metre. And finally, this great musician in verse seems to have had no ear for the harmonies of



prose. He remains, however, 'one of the master craftsmen of the French tongue' and 'the creator of the language of modern (French) poetry.'

Delivered first as a course of lectures at the Sorbonne, M. Cohen's book retains the vivacity of the speaking style. 'Ah! le beau vers!' he exclaims after a quotation, and his enthusiasm for his subject is infectious. From time to time the argument is clinched by a memorable formula: for example, the philosophical commonplaces of Ronsard's pindaric odes give us 'le frisson des grands truismes'; what is preciousity but 'une autre forme de l'enflure, l'enflure dans l'infiniment petit'; 'la satire épique—déformation agrandie et passionnée de l'histoire'; 'dans l'amour des poètes, la réalité n'est que le support accidentel de la fiction'; and 'l'Amour des poètes a toujours un peu d'encre au bout des doigts'. Apart from a score or more of misprints and one misquotation,<sup>3</sup> the whole book will be read with unalloyed pleasure. Perhaps the main factor in this is the author's sympathetic imagination, of which one example among many may be found in a footnote (p. 145), where the author marvels at the presence of so many future playwrights at the college performance of France's first classical tragedy. In another place (p. 257), there is the moving portrait of the aged and ailing poet ('Dans ces corps décharnés de savants et d'artistes mourants, deux choses survivent: le regard et la pensée. Les membres sont gourds, le cerveau est vivant. Presque exsangue, il semble fonctionner encore par la force acquise, et son activité se manifeste dans le sens qu'a déterminé toute une vie'), in nearly every word of which one may, with respect, discern the beloved Gustave Cohen himself, almost prophetically self-portrayed as he now is, at eighty years of age, confined to his wheel-chair but intellectually vigorous, indefatigably writing and revising, diffusing with learned and lucid zeal 'la grande clarté' of both Middle Ages and Renaissance, and radiating the warmth of his deep humanity. Long may he be spared to his host of disciples and friends!

<sup>1</sup> *La Littérature religieuse de François de Sales à Fénelon*: Paris, del Duca, 1956, pp. 11-12.

<sup>2</sup> Not without a momentary, but so far undocumented, approach to protestantism (see Cohen, p. 201).

<sup>3</sup> P. 211, where the restitution of a verse omitted after *faute* shows *ma* to be the correct reading after all, notwithstanding the footnote.

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J. G. CORNELL

THE SONG OF ROLAND; A NEW TRANSLATION, by Dorothy L. Sayers. *Penguin Books*, 1957 (The Penguin Classics, edited by E. V. Rieu, L 75).

The *Chanson de Roland* has been translated into English at least a dozen times since 1850. Although two of the translations were successful enough to run into a second edition, none was given the possibility of mass circulation offered by the Penguin market, and the publishers of this latest version deserve the highest praise for their enterprise. It is most unfortunate, however, that they did not commission a more suitable translation. The late Miss Sayers chose to attempt an imitation of the form of the Oxford version: assonanced *laisses*, pentameters, with caesura, and 'feminine' syllables. Even the imparisyllabic declension of proper names is not neglected, though it is used according to metrical rather than grammatical needs. Necessarily,

perhaps, the poem is 'done' into an English that never was on land or sea, and this inevitably produces almost comic discords (e.g. lines 303-05). The intentions were no doubt admirable, but the whole concept of such a version is profoundly wrong. Any translation which creates between the classic and the reader barriers additional to those already and unavoidably present because of history, cannot be other than a betrayal of the original. And this principle is surely of vital importance for a translation intended for a mass market.

That Miss Sayers' scholarship is not always sure is a matter of less consequence, but it must be noted. It is perhaps not surprising that some of the concepts underlying the poem are brought up to date; but some of the adjustments throw history—and good sense—to the winds: Charlemagne becomes a '“constitutional” monarch' (p. 14), and Ganelon a 'paranoiac' (p. 12); even the theology is distorted, when *Deu et ses nuns* (line 3694) becomes the apocryphal trinity of 'God, His power and Name'.

From the point of view of accurate translation: in certain lines there is a curious change of emphasis from the original (e.g. 18, 1635); elsewhere, differences in tone are slurred (e.g. the latinising prayer of 2384-89); and there is the occasional determinedly different translation (e.g. 33, 918) or careless rendering (p. 38, Oliver's sword is called 'Highbright').

The work would have been incomplete without the discovery of a Mystery (as if the *Roland* lacked them!); where did Ganelon put the *nusches* given him by Bramimonde? This is the subject of a special additional note of two pages which, by embroidering on the text and indulging in plain verbal jugglery ('stiff and bulky jewellery', 'unsightly bulge . . . apt to work down disconcertingly' . . . !), introduces confusion where all was reasonably clear.

Misprints are few and of little consequence except two: p. 29, read 'the Quatre Fils Aymon' (not 'Aymar'); and on p. 38, Barbamouche, Gramimond, Marmorie and Sautperdu are horses, not swords.

*Note.* None of the standard reference works gives a full list of modern translations of the *Roland*. Here, in brief, is as complete a list as it has been possible locally to compile: by Mrs Marsh (London, 1854); J. O'Hagan (London, 1880); L. Rabillon (New York, 1885); A. Way and F. Spencer (Nutt, 1895); Isobel Butler (Boston, 1904); J. Geddes (New York, 1906); Jessie Crosland (London, 1907; 2nd ed., 1924); H. Rieu (London, 1907); A. S. Way (Cambridge, 1913); L. Bacon (New Haven, 1914; 2nd ed., 1919); C. S. Moncrieff (London, 1919); R. Hague (London, 1937).

University of Auckland

K. J. HOLLYMAN

RIMBAUD. C. A. Hackett. *London, Bowes and Bowes*, 1957, pp. 109.

In this little book, in the series called *Studies in Modern European Literature and Thought*, Professor Hackett has taken on an impossible task and done it competently. By that paradox I mean that while it is impossible to expound Rimbaud to a general reader who is supposed to have little if any knowledge of French, the author has remained as coherent and as critical as if he were addressing himself to people with adequate linguistic equipment.

Rimbaud's 'early' period (all his work was done early) is evaluated as one in which he combined poetic 'exercises' with native rebelliousness; and that is, I think, an accurate assessment. Then comes the period of 'a new

poetic theory', as set out in the famous *Lettre du Voyant*. But Rimbaud, as Professor Hackett sees him, realised that *being* a visionary is not enough: one has to organise one's visionary powers, and *become* a poet—which implies mastery of language. Possibly in this respect the present book does not give sufficient attention to Rimbaud's Latinity, which plays an important role in the making of his linguistic discipline. Professor Hackett seems to classify the boy's Latin poems among his exercises, and go no further. In my opinion, however, there is both linguistic and poetic originality in Rimbaud's handling of the Jugurtha theme for a school competition.

The pages devoted to the *Illuminations* make good reading, and there is a convincing explanation (p. 57 et seq.) of *Après le Déluge*. But I cannot agree with the exegesis of *Enfance IV*, for it rests on the assumption that in the last 'line' *quelqu'un* is Rimbaud himself:

Il y a enfin, quand l'on a faim et soif, quelqu'un qui vous chasse.

The *Enfance* context (I, II, III, V, VI) makes it certain that these are reminiscences of childhood, and 'vous' refers to the poet as a small boy, as it does also in 'Au bois il y a un oiseau, son chant *vous* arrête et *vous* fait rougir'. We can imagine the boy walking (not alone, alas) in the country round Charleville. For him everything has a magical significance: the note of a bird makes him redden with swift pleasure; the clock in a tower *ought* to be singing too, but is silent ('Il y a une horloge qui ne sonne pas'). But when, partly from intensity of interest, partly from hunger and thirst, he wants to stop, there is always *quelqu'un* to hustle him along. That one word evokes a brutal irruption of authority into the magical world of childhood.

There is an unfortunate piece of phrasing in the biographical appendix, where (p. 97) we find: 'From 1880 until 1891 . . . his life was spent in Africa—at Aden . . . and then . . . in Harar'; which can only mean, when analysed, that Aden is in Africa. And there are at least two unfortunate recommendations in the list of Selected English Translations (p. 100).

Speaking of translation, it is a pity that in his own renderings, at the end of the volume, of passages quoted in the text, the author has not taken more pains to catch at least something of the spirit of the original. To take one example among many: in *Le Cœur volé* those marvellous lines

Ithyphalliques et pioupiesques,  
Leurs quolibets l'ont dépravé!

are baldly rendered as 'Their gibes, of the obscene infantry kind, have debauched it!' It is rather like trying to convey an idea of a musical masterpiece by tapping it on a table. Here, explanation would have been better than translation, so that the 'general reader' might be helped to realise the wealth of semantic suggestiveness that is packed into the two long adjectives.

Incidentally, in this poem

J'aurai des sursauts stomachiques,  
Moi, si mon cœur est ravalé,

is translated as: 'For me, a belching stomach, if my heart is degraded so low'. But this sense of *ravalé* simply does not square with the preceding 'if'; for this is no mere hypothesis, the boy's heart *has* already been degraded, as the context shows. It seems to me that 'swallowed again' would be more in conformity with the poet's logic. He has, to express it in a popular phrase, 'brought his heart up'; hence the two earlier lines:

O flots abracadabrantésques,  
Prenez mon cœur, qu'il soit lavé.

MOTIF SYMBOLISM IN THE DISCIPLES OF MALLARME. John Andrew Frey. *Catholic Univ. of America Press*, 1957, pp. xi + 158.

This dissertation for the Ph.D. has a printed cover and title-page, the text is in phototype. In his Introduction the author examines the meaning and intention of Symbolism, and the part played in it by the big figures. This is interesting, though when he compares Rimbaud and Mallarmé Mr Frey is somewhat puzzling. Having remarked that Mallarmé's symbols are interior (but what of his numerous sunsets?), while Rimbaud's are from active life, he continues: 'Stylistically this means for Mallarmé the suppression of the verb to the profit of the substantive, the singular over the plural (sic), and a preference for the abstract. For Rimbaud it means a preference for the verb, a pronounced use of plurals, and a marked tense relationship.'

This conclusion, borrowed (with acknowledgment) from Jacques Gingoux, is hardly borne out by an examination of *Bateau ivre*, with its coruscating mass of substantives; or of *l'Après-midi d'un Faune*, where the verbs are very important for determining the time-relations. Indeed, the very fact that this conclusion is unquestioningly accepted from another commentator makes one ask whether Mr Frey has made for himself that long, careful analysis of the actual texts which is a *sine qua non* in this field.

He makes a much more useful statement on p. xvi, where he quotes from Svend Johansen (*Le Symbolisme*, Copenhagen, 1945) a definition of Motif Symbolism. It is 'a function by which two images of equal value enjoy an interior correspondence, and are so joined as to make the tonality possible only because of their interpenetration and unity'. On the whole, I agree, only pointing out that often more than two images in a Mallarmé poem have equal value and enjoy an interior correspondence (e.g. in 'Ses purs ongles . . .'). But I am more than disconcerted when on p. xvii Mr Frey gives a half-page quotation from Svend Johansen (with regard to 'Surgi de la croupe et du bond . . .') in which there are two gross errors in French: '*cette* accablant problème' and '*la* sylphe' (twice).

In this study Mr Frey examines the practice of Motif Symbolism in Symbolist poets, and poets on the fringe of Symbolism, who have been influenced but overshadowed by Mallarmé. Throughout, I am disturbed by generalisations that strike me as being rather rash. Thus on p. 5 we are told that 'Pierre Louys perhaps was the most Hellenistic poet and writer of France'. How 'Hellenistic' are *les Aventures du Roi Pausole*? And what of Ronsard, Anatole France? Or even Leconte de Lisle?

Still, that is not as bad as the statement on p. 4 that 'Ernest Reynaud is the least *romane* of the Romanistes'; my quarrel here being not with the generalisation (which is more or less a truism), but with the unfortunate gender of the adjective.

When he quotes texts at any length, Mr Frey gives translations in his footnotes; and these are sometimes not very felicitous. Thus, on pp. 89-90, these phrases from Fontainas' sonnet, *Le parc sentimentale* (sic!),

. . . s'affine une odeur

De verveine frissons infinis et mièvres,  
are translated as:

. . . an odor of verbena is

busy to refine infinite and teasing thrillings.

'Teasing thrillings' is cacophonous; and in any case, 'thrillings' is too transitive to correspond here to 'frissons'. Worse, the scent of verbena is not, in the original, refining anything except itself; nor can 'mièvres' be rendered by 'teasing'. In conformity with his own and Svend Johansen's



thesis, moreover, Mr Frey should have recognised that 'odeur' and 'frissons' are 'two images of equal value' that 'enjoy an interior correspondence'.

To sum up: Mr Frey's dissertation is sometimes interesting, but far too inexact. It is also too diffuse: he wanders all round his texts, instead of penetrating into the heart of them. And he is really too ingenuous in his assumption that one can get at the truths of Symbolism through other commentators without very carefully and critically checking all their assertions.

Melbourne

A. R. CHISHOLM

TRENDS AND STYLES IN TWENTIETH CENTURY FRENCH LITERATURE. Helmut Hatzfeld. *Washington, The Catholic University of America Press*, 1957, pp. ix + 262.

Dr Hatzfeld's *Literature through Art, a New Approach to French Literature* was published in New York by the Oxford University Press in 1952. His *Trends and Styles* is a survey, from a Catholic view-point, of themes and styles in contemporary French literature. Thus, after an introduction on the general situation which represents the present age as one of *anti-réalisme*, there are chapters under the headings of individual and group in tension; voices of sex, earth and clan; introspection, new aspects of love, *acte gratuit*; forms of evasion; existentialist engagement; spirituality; abstract art and pure poetry; collective stylistic achievements.

The method is to discern these trends in representative works of contemporary writers and to present them with illustrations from the works selected. Since, as the preface says, 'the book is meant to appeal to the educated reader who has a certain liking for French culture, and also to advanced undergraduate and graduate students specialising in French, . . . the quotations are mostly given in French'. It is a disadvantage that some of the extracts from French texts, however, are given in English, and on the whole there is an over-abundance of reference and short quotation. Most of the works discussed are analysed, but as three types of analysis are used—summary, brief, and extensive—there is a lack of balance in the presentation.

Whereas the preface states that 'the facts given and judgments passed are illustrated by many quotations and justified in rather numerous footnotes', the book contains no footnotes at all. The notes are grouped by chapters at the end of the book, and as few chapters have less than forty notes, and one as many as seventy-nine, the task of consulting them may be tedious. However, these notes constitute also a special bibliography which, together with the general selective bibliography of works and monographs, provides useful reference material.

Uncorrected misprints such as *La Chronique des Pasquiers* (three times on p. 31), *Le Relève du matin* (p. 39), are unfortunate in a book of this kind. There are also occasional peculiarities of usage and idiom and some sentences whose meaning is not clear, such as—'The propensity to the voluptuous is balanced by a rather robust brush used for many little tableaux.' (p. 27.)

The book is in the manner of a literary essay rather than a literary history and, as Dr Hatzfeld frankly states, the choice of material and the emphasis put on it clearly show his own preferences. The attempt to present in one book so many trends and styles leads to a hurried treatment of some aspects, and this is particularly evident in the final chapter on collective

stylistic achievements as well as in the paragraphs on style in the other chapters.

The book, however, contains a great deal of information, carefully linked with dates of publication of works, which will help the general reader, as well as the student, to discern trends in French literature since 1900.

University of Queensland

J. C. MAHONEY

INITIATION A L'EXPLICATION DE TEXTES FRANCAIS. Helmut Hatzfeld. *Max Hueber Verlag, München, 1957.*

L'initiation à l'explication française du professeur Helmut Hatzfeld est sans conteste le livre d'un érudit; c'est la première chose qui frappe le lecteur. Le professeur Hatzfeld n'évite pas la difficulté, il semble au contraire la chercher et s'en jouer, il fait preuve dans ses explications d'un talent d'analyste indéniable et d'une grande virtuosité à faire parler les textes, à en extraire toute l'essence.

Le choix des textes à expliquer, présentant une grande variété dans les genres littéraires, est fait de façon très judicieuse; bref, c'est l'ouvrage d'un savant. Ses explications sont creusées, fouillées et ne laissent rien dans l'ombre. Mais par cela même, elles dépassent parfois le but à atteindre qui est d'initier, suivant le titre même de l'ouvrage.

Certaines explications comme celle du texte de Pascal ont l'allure d'une démonstration géométrique ou d'une équation algébrique plutôt que d'une explication d'un texte littéraire. Elles sont très difficiles à saisir par le non initié. Par contre d'autres explications comme celles des textes de Balzac, Gautier ou Baudelaire sont claires et simples et par conséquent à la portée de l'étudiant ou de l'analyste débutant. Quoique présentées de manière originale, les explications de texte du professeur Hatzfeld sont classiques dans leur fond, et respectent le principe fondamental qui est la précision. A l'exception de quelques-unes dans lesquelles il s'appesantit assez lourdement sur les détails, le professeur Hatzfeld écarte de ses explications tout commentaire qui n'est pas utile à l'entendement du texte.

Dans sa préface le professeur Hatzfeld critique la distinction habituelle qui est faite dans une explication de texte entre le fond et la forme. Il faut donc convenir d'abord, dit-il, que la distinction commode entre le fond et la forme n'est plus acceptable; et il ajoute, il n'y a pas de forme détachée du fond puisque la forme extérieure n'existe que comme partie intégrante de la forme intérieure. Il rejoint par là C. Rudler qui dit dans *L'Explication française, principes et applications*: 'la forme n'est qu'une idée développée, idée et forme sont une seule et même chose chez les bons écrivains'. En effet, chaque texte constitue un tout, le fond et la forme se complètent et se soutiennent et c'est la forme qui donne son tour spécial à la pensée. Cependant, puisqu'il est question d'*analyser* un texte, peut-on faire autrement que de séparer les éléments qui le composent? Rien n'est plus facile à saisir par l'étudiant que cette explication séparée du fond et de la forme. L'analyste après avoir étudié séparément la forme intérieure et extérieure, montrera les liens qui les unissent et l'influence de l'une sur l'autre. Que vous l'appeliez comme C. Rudler idée maîtresse, sentiment dominant, ou comme le professeur Hatzfeld, compréhension générale et commentaire, problème de source et d'histoire littéraire, cela n'est autre qu'une étude de fond présentée suivant le goût personnel de chacun. On aimerait cependant que le professeur Hatzfeld insiste davantage sur cette

partie que sur la forme structurelle ou sur l'analyse stylistique car, à moins d'avoir affaire à un texte qui est un échantillon de l'art pour l'art, le but principal d'un écrivain c'est d'exprimer une pensée, une opinion ou un sentiment.

A signaler aussi quelques coquilles, fautes de genre et d'accord qui se sont glissées dans le livre: '*une squelette logique cachée*' page 38; '*la squelette sémantique* de la phrase est sans doute *celle-ci*', page 134; '*paradoxe surprenante*', page 134; conte pour compte, page 138, '*la seule chose qui conte ici*'.

Ces réserves faites, il me reste à complimenter le professeur Hatzfeld pour son livre '*Initiation à l'explication de textes français*' qui dénote chez lui un esprit clair, méthodique, original et une connaissance parfaite de la littérature et des méthodes stylistiques françaises.

University of Sydney

D. BENSOUSSAN

ROMAIN ROLLAND—LUGNE-POE. CORRESPONDANCE 1894-1901, présentée avec une introduction et des notes par Jacques Robichez. Paris, L'Arche, 1957.

Romain Rolland (1866-1944) seemed destined for a brilliant academic career when he successfully defended his doctoral theses in 1895, before he was thirty years of age. However, he had other aspirations, for he had already written, impetuously, a number of plays—but had sought in vain for a producer.

At this time Lugné-Poe (1869-1940) was at the head of the *Théâtre de l'Oeuvre*, a vanguard group intent on discovering a new dramatic form and, consequently, eager to produce the plays of symbolist innovators and of the Scandinavians Strindberg, Ibsen and Bjornson, who were in this way made known in France. In 1897 Lugné-Poe was in dire straits: the performance of Jarry's *Ubu roi* in 1896 was thought scandalous and turned people away from *L'Oeuvre*; Ibsen repudiated Lugné-Poe's interpretation of his plays and would not allow him to produce his new *J. G. Borkman*; then Lugné-Poe chose this singularly inopportune moment to break with the symbolist dramatists. Thus he was led to enlist the services of young writers, including Romain Rolland.

Subsequently three of Romain Rolland's plays were produced at *L'Oeuvre*: *Aért* (3 May 1898), *Les Loups* (18 May 1898) and *Le Triomphe de la Raison* (21 June 1899). The *Correspondance* is in the main concerned with rehearsals and arrangements for the production of these plays. The initial aloofness of actor and dramatist gradually gives way to a measure of cordiality which is however short-lived: in 1899 Romain Rolland abandoned the theatre, and his close association with Lugné-Poe comes to an end.

The text of the letters is preceded by an *Avant-Propos* and an *Introduction*. The *Avant-Propos* is in the form of a careful and detailed bibliography of printed and manuscript sources for the study of Romain Rolland and Lugné-Poe, while the *Introduction*, some forty pages in length, gives a chronological summary of the lives of the correspondents until the end of 1893, and indicates briefly the formative influences they underwent. This valuable survey is followed by a searching study of the relations between actor and dramatist during the period covered by this correspondence, 1894-1901.

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M. Robichez has included in this volume ninety-two letters of Romain Rolland and fifty-seven of Lugné-Poe. He has scrupulously respected the text of the letters and reproduces the original spelling and punctuation. His commentary is exhaustive, based not only on printed works and periodical publications, but on a large number of unpublished documents, of which many are in his own possession.

In conclusion, it can be said that this volume constitutes a rich source of information on the largely unknown early years and struggles of Romain Rolland. It offers moreover a valuable glimpse of the development of the theatre in France as the nineteenth century drew to a troubled end.

Victoria University of Wellington

P. M. CONLON

THIRTY FRENCH POEMS WITH COMMENTS. A. R. Chisholm. Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1957, pp. 95.

This collection of poems begins with Ronsard, then touches briefly on the 18th century and concentrates on the 19th century. It comes to an end with Valéry. There are to begin with a number of useful pages of *Notes on French Versification*. Then come the poems with modern spelling, an appendix on the *Evolution of French Poetry* and finally a vocabulary.

Professor Chisholm defines his object when he writes in the *Preface for Students*: 'The main purpose of this book is to make you realise that French poetry is not just a "subject" to be "swotted" and then, when the examinations are over, swiftly forgotten. If you approach it in the right way, you will find that it is extraordinarily enjoyable.' Students then are to read for pleasure, and poems have been chosen so as to form this praiseworthy attitude. The poems are mainly lyrical, occasionally philosophical or satirical. Professor Chisholm has had the courage to include usual anthology pieces like Ronsard's 'Quand vous serez bien vieille' and largely unknown works such as 'Loin du monde' by Marceline Desbordes-Valmore.

In general the poems are readily accessible to beginners except possibly Heredia's 'Après Cannes' with its 'lectisterne' and 'ergastule', and its numerous classical references. For those who are puzzled by such matters there are notes. Professor Chisholm has been careful to place a short commentary at the end of each poem so as to explain obscurities, and to analyse the poet's technique. He also offers interesting suggestions for interpreting each poem. But he is not dogmatic, and he rightly observes: 'The interpretation of poetical nuances is largely a personal matter.'

The book is intended for 'pupils at a senior pre-university stage'. As such it will undoubtedly give valuable service. Indeed it may well prove useful for giving beginners at University an introduction to French verse, and in particular to the riches of the 19th century.

Victoria University of Wellington

P. M. CONLON

FABLIAUX, selected and edited by R. C. Johnston and D. D. R. Owen. Oxford, 1957 (Blackwell's French Texts., General Editor: A. Ewert.)

This latest and very competent addition to an excellent series fills a long-felt gap, and will provide a fine stimulus to the broadening of courses in



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medieval literature. Fifteen fabliaux are printed, with an adequate Introduction and general Bibliography, individual bibliographical, textual and explanatory notes to each poem, and a suitably extensive glossary.

The following is a list of the poems included, with observations on particular points. I. *D'un pseudome qui rescolt son compere de noier*. II. *Du vilain asnier*. Line 50n: the connection is clearer if *orgueil* is taken as 'pride of the senses' (in this case, the sense of smell). III. *Estula* (probably the best known of fabliaux, but the text here, as with most of the poems, follows a different MS. from the usual). If the edition in Constans' *Chrestomathie* (1890) is mentioned, why not also that in Toynbee's *Specimens* (1892), p. 244-48 (MS. A)? It is at least equally familiar. IV. *Brifaut* (also known by the first line: *D'un vilain riche et nonsachant*). The note to line 71 needs complete re-writing: see P. Barbier in *Mélanges Mario Roques*, t.II (Bade-Paris, 1953), p. 23-26. *Brifauder* is not a hapax, nor does it derive from the proper name *Brifaud*. *Brifaud*, a common noun meaning 'glutton', was deliberately chosen as a suitable name for the character. V. *Des trois boçus*. VI. *La borgoise d'Orliens*. VII. *Baillet*. VIII. *De Brunain, la vache au prestre*. IX. *Du provoire qui menga les mores*. X. *Li testament de l'asne*. The prose *Testament du chien* (*Cent nouvelles nouvelles*, XCVI), which is well-known, should have been mentioned here. XI. *Dou povre mercier*. XII. *De la male Honte*. Version by Guillaume, with references in the notes to that by Huon. XIII. *Du vilein mire*. The Studer-Waters *Hist. Fr. Reader* (1924) has (no. 28) lines 108-226 and 299-386 (MS. A). Lines 32-33n: the lines as translated do not make reasonable sense; surely *en* refers forward, not back to *noces*: read 'the girl, who (would have) grieved greatly if she had dared to do otherwise'. XIV. *Saint Pierre et le jongleur*. R. L. Wagner, in *Textes d'étude* (1949), pp. 101-03, prints lines 121-156 (MS. A). XV. *Du chevalier qui recovra l'amor de sa dame*.

University of Auckland

K. J. HOLLYMAN

MODERN HUMANITIES IN THE TECHNOLOGICAL AGE. P. Mansell Jones, Professor Emeritus in the University of Manchester. *Manchester U.P.*, 1957.

The many frontal or surreptitious attacks made in recent times on the Humanities by the protagonists of Science have called forth replies, some of which have been emotional, even irrational. In his reasoned argument of the case, presented to a meeting of the Association of Heads of French Departments in Great Britain in March 1957, Professor Mansell Jones points out that the dominance of Science in the public mind is not purely a recent phenomenon, but has been implicit in the nature of University development since the middle of the 19th century. This development has led to the popular concept of the aim of a University as being the discovery of new knowledge and the idea that this new knowledge alone is truth. Yet the pursuit of truth and the studies which accompany it are equally the field of the Humanities. The work of Science demands extensive equipment and finance, and hence draws attention to itself by its very size, whereas it is precisely the virtue of many humane subjects that they can be approached without an elaborate technical apparatus.

But, in Professor Mansell Jones' view, the modern humanities are in worse danger of being undermined from *within* by the sciences of erudition and the techniques of research, than through attacks from

without. 'Research is at once the flower and virus of Arts. Under the impetus of powerful movements like the history of literature and the history of language, a ponderous wedge has been thrust between the undergraduate and the great texts of humanism; and undergraduates by their thousands have been directed to regard such texts as examples for scholarly comment and technical observation rather than as terminal objects they should be studying for the good that is in them for the reader.'

The basic ideas which should be presented and discussed in an Arts education occur in forms readily available for study. The greater forms of literature offer the most inclusive presentation of all those elements—ethos, attitudes, standards, motives—which characterise a great civilisation and constitute the invaluable stuff of humanistic studies. If the student, in the brief period of his University life, is directed predominantly to the techniques and minutiae of research, he may well miss the wood for the trees.

In his own field of French, Professor Mansell Jones thus suggests that honours should be conceived as a course in modern humanities, not as a course in antiquarianism. Great texts should be studied for the great lessons they contain. This does not exclude analysis and must naturally be based on sound scholarship, but the research should have been done by the teacher rather than the student. With the increasing number of specialised studies in French courses, students are less and less able to appreciate the field as a whole, and do not achieve that humanistic training we purport to give them. Mansell Jones suggests that departments might differentiate themselves more by predominant interests, so that students could be redistributed later according to the nature of their special aptitudes. There could also be a major differentiation chronologically of studies, say, into (1) Mediaeval and Renaissance (2) Renaissance and Modern, and finally, more co-operation between departments in the creation of combined honours courses of four years' duration. Whether these differentiations are to be made within departments, or at different Universities, is not clear.

Although directed specifically at French courses in British Universities, Professor Mansell Jones' comments should receive equal attention in Australasia, where language departments, bent on maintaining their citadel against attacks from the sciences, should not weaken their position by inattention to problems within their own camp.

*University of Melbourne*

E. K. HORWOOD

**A GENERAL EDUCATION THROUGH SPECIALIZATION: THE CHALLENGE TO MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN NEW ZEALAND.** E. W. Herd, Professor of Modern Languages. An inaugural lecture delivered before the University of Otago on 3 May 1957.

Professor Herd in his inaugural address defines his purpose as a teacher of languages in the university as two-fold: it is vocational in that it prepares students for a task or a profession; it is philosophical in providing 'an interpretation, in the broadest sense of the word, of the country and people whose language we are studying' (p. 6). Having stated his aim as a teacher, Professor Herd then examines the syllabus that is traditional

in the universities of New Zealand for teaching modern languages. He concludes by analysing the different methods which he thinks most appropriate for teaching literature, the most important aspect of language study.

Generally speaking, he accepts the different ways in which the study of languages is approached in New Zealand: translation, tuition in the spoken language, philology and literature. However, on all these subjects he makes pertinent comment. In speaking of translation Professor Herd is led to examine the importance of grammar and syntax, and places them in what seems a proper perspective. Apart from being an 'excellent mental discipline', they are 'an indispensable prerequisite for the understanding of a foreign language, and hence of a foreign literature with a whole new world of ideas to be discovered' (p. 8). Teachers who value accuracy and clarity will agree, and most will approve of his warning that for students 'mastery of syntax and grammar is a necessary first step, and *not* an end in itself' (p. 8).

Teaching students to speak a foreign language in New Zealand offers virtually insuperable difficulties, and Professor Herd will move his colleagues to sympathetic response when he states that 'every department of modern languages should have on its permanent staff a French *lecteur* and a German *Lektor*' (p. 9). He might indeed have added that this practice is well established in Australian universities. In modified form, it exists in all British universities and in many American universities.

Philology, 'the scientific study of linguistic history', is greeted with diffidence. Not that Professor Herd would do away with it completely. He considers that other studies are more important for undergraduates, and would prefer to leave philology as a post-graduate course: 'Philology is that part of our course which contributes least to our fundamental aim of teaching languages as the key to an understanding of a modern, contemporary society and civilisation. There should be a place for it in our syllabus, but whether it can be claimed that philology is an essential part of our course, considering all the other demands made on teachers and students, seems to me questionable' (p. 11). This attitude will doubtless surprise many, as Professor Herd assumes when he qualifies it as 'heretical'; but then most orthodoxies at their inception were described in just that way. His attitude is a reasonable one: the study of philology is a legitimate scholarly pursuit but is not, for that reason, a rewarding activity for undergraduates in New Zealand.

In his discussion of language as a means of giving a liberal education, Professor Herd considers that the study of literature 'must be the cornerstone of our work' (p. 13). He goes on to make an interesting and detailed analysis of the various ways in which literary studies may be pursued at university, considering in turn the method followed by literary historians with their emphasis on factual data, and the formalist approach based primarily on stylistic analysis. These methods are scholarly and profitable; but they are narrow, and not sufficient to enable a student to 'distil from literature the spiritual essence of an epoch' (p. 18). They need then to be supplemented by an 'interpretative' approach 'which will seek to reveal through literature, not only the personality and thought of the author, but also to indicate the contribution of the author's work to the development of the group whose language he uses, and to keep us aware of the broader stream of development, of which literature is only one, even though the clearest and most immediate, form of expression' (p. 19). Such training will make students aware of the rich variety that exists in human



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affairs and, by stimulating interest in the ideas and ways of people in other countries, should prove an effective counter to intellectual stagnation and asphyxiating complacency. Thus Professor Herd is led to conclude, quoting Nietzsche: 'Deine Erzieher vermoege nichts zu sein, als dein Befreier'.

Professor Herd's address is worthy of the closest attention for it is a convincing and elegant demonstration of what can be done to meet 'the challenge to modern language teaching in New Zealand', and elsewhere.

Victoria University of Wellington

P. M. CONLON

THE HARRAP ANTHOLOGY OF GERMAN POETRY. Edited by August Closs and T. Pugh Williams. London, 1957, pp. 563.

This anthology goes a long way to meet the criticisms of the *Oxford Book of German Verse*, made in the review of *The Penguin Book of German Verse* (AUMLA 7, Nov. 1957, p. 69). Unfortunately it must now stand comparison with Professor Forster's anthology as well as with Professor Fiedler's, and one cannot help feeling that this new anthology comes too late and is too expensive. For the additional cost we do not really get a more representative or a richer selection of German verse than is now available in the Penguin anthology.

There are nine examples of Old High German verse and 25 pages of Middle High German verse, but this is only a relatively small increase on the number of selections from these periods included by Forster. Moreover the editors of the Harrap anthology have an unfortunate predilection for snippets, noticeable not only in the OHG section (e.g. the two lines of the *Züricher Segen* p. 70) but throughout the book (cf. the two-line quotations from Logau and from Angelus Silesius, the selections from Lessing's *Sinngedichte*, Schiller's *Distichon*, or the three-line quotations from Rilke's *Stunden-Buch*. Allied to this defect, which sometimes produces the effect of a dictionary of quotations rather than of an anthology of verse, is an apparent lack of an overall guiding principle in the selection. It is a matter of personal taste whether *Abzählreime* (p. 120) should be included, but if a passage from Hofmannsthal's *Der Tor und der Tod* is to be presented complete with stage directions, one cannot help wondering why there is no excerpt from *Faust*, or whether Grillparzer might not have been better represented by a passage from one of his dreams. The undoubted merits of this anthology—the great range from the *Wessobrunner Gebet* to Krolow and Hollerer, the inclusion in full of longer poems such as Hölderlin's *Brod und Wein* and *Der Rhein*, or Schiller's *Lied von der Glocke*, and of poems in the original dialect form by J. P. Hebel, Reuter and Klaus Groth—belong equally to the Penguin anthology, but the present editors, in addition to the defects mentioned above, seem to have returned to the emphasis of *The Oxford Book of German Verse* on the faded Romantic tradition of the XIXth century.

The Introduction gives an historical survey (pp. 33-61), which is sound enough in content, but immeasurably irritating in style. The frequent occurrence of such outworn and sometimes meaningless 'turns of phrase' as 'in spite of posterity's strictures' or 'his reputation has survived him' or 'to plumb the depths of human experience, and to satisfy the passionately fervent heart which the tenets of Aufklärung held in uneasy bondage'



makes this Introduction read like a parody of Victorian style, or, as in the comments on Klopstock (pp. 42-43) a series of platitudinous generalities. It seems hardly possible for a critic in 1957 to write in all seriousness such lines as the following, to be found on p. 60: 'there is nevertheless in present-day Germany a concert of poetic voices which, now as ever during the centuries which have elapsed since the first beginnings of German verse, give utterance . . . to the persistent themes of German poetry.'

Even if Professor Forster's Penguin anthology had not made the appearance of this book seem belated, the editors themselves seem to insist on its affinity with a much older tradition. It is a pity, but it is difficult to see how this anthology can now fulfil any new and useful purpose for students and teachers of German literature.

University of Otago

E. W. HERD

HEINRICH VON KLEISTS LEBENSPUREN. Dokumente und Berichte von Zeitgenossen. Edited by Helmut Sembdner. *Carl Schünemann, Bremen* 1957 (Sammlung Dieterich, vol. 172), pp. xii + 548.

This is a most welcome and indispensable collection of documents tracing the life story of Heinrich von Kleist (1778-1811) in all available documents, reports and allusions to the writer found in contemporary sources; it is complementary to the only other source for Kleist we have, the letters from his own hands. The book closes a gap that has long been felt strongly as so much of Kleist's eventful and tragic life is shrouded in mystery. Flodoard von Biedermann published over 45 years ago a slim volume of 'Gespräche' (Leipzig 1912) which has been out of print for decades. Meanwhile a considerable volume of new information on Kleist has come to light; furthermore Biedermann's collection was unreliable in many respects. Dr Sembdner has sifted and verified Biedermann's material, added the new material of the last half century and thereby increased our knowledge fourfold. Also his presentation is a very great improvement on his predecessor's. He has arranged the material in an exemplary way with many cross-references for our guidance. He includes, for instance, all reviews of Kleist's works and periodical publications, and of the stage productions of his plays found in contemporary periodicals, so that we gain an immediate impression of the impact of his work on his own time. Dr Sembdner also inserts in his chronological arrangement all available letters to Kleist, and the dearth of information about this writer is illustrated by the fact that only 18 letters addressed to him are extant; most of them are copies of official correspondence (e.g. by the Prussian Prime Minister von Hardenberg) found in State archives, because Kleist destroyed all his correspondence before he committed suicide. However, one letter each from Goethe, Christoph Wieland and Iffland, the manager of the National Theatre in Berlin, have been preserved.

Besides the life and the personality as reflected in the eyes of contemporaries, Dr Sembdner traces in detail the impact of the double suicide, committed by Kleist and Mme Vogel, upon the public. It caused a sensation and so much discussion that it even found extensive treatment in the Paris 'Moniteur' of 18 December and the London 'Times' of 28 December 1811. Furthermore Dr Sembdner appends all available

material about the fate of Kleist's work after his death until it was gradually unearthed, collected and edited (for the first time by Ludwig Tieck in 1821 and 1826) although much of his creative work, not to speak of his letters and diaries, is lost.

Dr Sembdner's volume shows that there are still stretches in Kleist's life which are unexplored; however, Sembdner's own valuable finds in forgotten archives and other places arouse the hope that his efforts will be emulated and the search for further traces of Kleist's life and work will continue. In the meantime we have here the 'prolegomena' for a revised biography of a writer who appears as modern as any of our contemporary men of letters. At the same time, Dr Sembdner has already given us a most readable and authentic indirect biography, which, as he rightly says in his excellent short introduction, 'is bound to have a more exciting effect in its immediacy than the inventive imagination of a novelist.'

University of Melbourne

R. H. SAMUEL

SCHILLER AND THE CHANGING PAST. Mainland, F. W. *London, Heinemann, 1957, pp. xii + 207.*

Professor Mainland's book *Schiller and the Changing Past* (Heinemann, 1957) is not another attempt to give a general account of Schiller's life and works (the kind of work of which there have been several in recent years). Rather is he concerned with commenting on and elucidating difficulties or what he considers points of special interest in a number of plays (e.g. his inaugural lecture in an abridged form on *Wilhelm Tell* at the University of Sheffield) and in Schiller's great essay *Ueber Naive und Sentimentalische Dichtung*. The reason for inclusion of the latter (an annotated edition by Professor Mainland appeared in 1951) may have been that the author sees in it, as he says, an antithetical principle of construction similar to that of the drama. Only in a very general sense can this new work on Schiller be said to have a unified theme; our difficulties of interpretation arising out of the changing views of Schiller from his own day to our own. The author singles out and deals interestingly with such problems as the two endings of *Fiesco* and their possible motivation, the ambiguities connected with the so-called Buttler letter in *Wallensteins Tod*, the question of the titular hero's function in *Wilhelm Tell* and Schiller's discussion in his essay of contemporary poets whom owing to naive traits he has trouble in regarding as modern.

In all cases Professor Mainland turns all the resources of criticism on to the particular problem: evidence outside the text, Schiller's general characteristics of composition and the like. In doing so, he leaves the impression of being at least as much interested in his method and the general principle involved as in Schiller, even though he is obviously steeped in the latter. Parts of the book read indeed like a discussion with students whom he is warning of pitfalls in interpretation or to whom he is demonstrating his processes of thought. This method does not by any means always achieve the clarity which restriction to the results might have done. The thought is not infrequently tortuous or disjointed and one constantly finds oneself wondering how this or that point has been reached. It being his aim to illustrate his principle of interpretation by clearing up details, Professor Mainland is led into digressions, one prompting the other, which tend to obscure the subject of the chapter

in question. Thus he introduces and concludes his chapter on *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* (the subtitle is: *The Tragedy of Dedication*) by a comparison with *Maria Stuart*; but in the middle section he digresses to a number of details which read as if each began with a parenthesis which has not been closed.

Peculiarities of expression added to this kind of thinking diminish one's pleasure in reading a work which contains so many stimulating points of detail.

University of Sydney

R. B. FARRELL

GEORG KAISER. B. J. Kenworthy. (Modern Language Studies), Oxford. Blackwell, 1957, pp. xxiv + 217, 4 illustrations.

Interest in the Expressionist Movement, which had its literary high tide between 1910 and 1924, is rising again. After having been condemned as 'decadent art' and suppressed during the Nazi régime, a great stocktaking of it has been taking place in Germany since the war. Its influence, in particular with regard to drama and stage craft, has been world wide, although a study of its radiations is still lacking.

Georg Kaiser (1875-1945) was a pioneering and foremost Expressionist playwright. Dr Kenworthy, Lecturer in German at Aberdeen, has provided us with a study of Kaiser which is beyond doubt the fullest and most comprehensive written so far. Kaiser's fame declined with the decline of the Expressionist Movement; but he continued to write and to publish right down to his death in Switzerland to which he emigrated late in 1938. And in Switzerland some of his later plays were performed soon after their composition, in particular those which dealt with the problems of Hitler's dictatorship and the second world war. Kaiser's last works were three *Griechische Dramen* (1943-44, publ. in Zürich 1948) and 140 poems (1944-45; unpublished)—his only excursion into poetic drama and poetry—and the latter are full of despair. Kaiser's loneliness, his divorce from life's reality, his reforming zeal, his ultimate sense of failure make sad reading in Mr Kenworthy's condensed but revealing biographical sketch (pp. xv-xxiv).

The chief merit of the book is its completeness. We now have a full survey of Kaiser's *œuvre*: 59 dramas, 2 novels, 10 essays, and the poetry mentioned above. As some of his works are still in MS. (Dr Kenworthy enjoyed the assistance of Frau Margarete Kaiser for his research), and hardly any of the famous early works were reprinted after the war,<sup>1</sup> the detailed reconstructions of the plot with a wealth of quotations are very valuable. They testify to Kaiser's almost incredibly fertile imagination and make absorbing reading as stories in their own right. The range of Kaiser's subject matter too is fantastic. The past and present are blended in his work, and problems of a personal and intimate nature alternate with those of immediate contemporaneity. Dr Kenworthy's grouping of Kaiser's work under four themes in corresponding four chapters is, however, not entirely satisfactory. The themes are: the urges of the flesh with the concomitant violation of the intellect;—the 'regeneration dramas' with their social criticism and their 'myth of the new man';—the dramas dealing with the 'triumph of the mind' over matter;—the dramas dealing with the problems of the artist. It is obvious that so far-ranging an *opus* cannot be arranged under stiffly defined headings; that many

works tend to transgress from the sphere allotted to them into others; that there is no transition from one theme to the other in time. Therefore Kaiser's development is somewhat blurred. The question is, of course, whether Kaiser ever underwent a development, and whether his work constitutes an organic whole. At one stage of the inquiry the author remarks that there appears 'to be no order, no underlying unity' in Kaiser's work, but he thinks he can find it in the 'fundamental and all-pervasive vision of the regeneration of man'. This is undoubtedly true, but it would have been of great interest to have had included in Dr Kenworthy's study an inquiry into the question as to how far or whether at all Kaiser ever moved away from the Expressionist line. For this purpose much more attention would have had to be paid to research into Kaiser's style, and the lack of this is the one serious omission in the book. What appears to be clear is that Kaiser remained the 'Denkspieler' throughout his literary career, a divided mind who transformed dialectics into a dramatic technique and saw in the 'Drama Platons' (1917, the title of his most important, though very short, essay) the basis for a new form of drama. What also remained unaltered was his icy intellectualism and his inability to grapple with the reality around him, but the sparks of true genius were always present, a certain brilliancy of execution and, most important, the elevation of seemingly trifling subject matter to idealist heights. Kaiser's mind, his way of working, his never ceasing experimentalism are revealed in an interesting quotation from another essay which may be quoted in English translation here:

The written drama always means a setting out for another drama—formulating forward surging energies of thought. What is the playwright's attitude towards his completed work? With the last word he wrote he leaves it alone—and subjects himself by coercion and decision to a new formulation of drama, towards which he urges forward as over the steps of an unending flight of stairs. To have to obey this irrepressible coercion is mission. Mission is obedience—submission—humility which offers itself in the creative act. (Ex: *Bericht vom Drama*, 1925, quoted p. 99).

Dr Kenworthy's scholarly accuracy in presenting his material, his chronological lists of Kaiser's complete works published (with names of publishers) and unpublished, of the first performances of his plays, of translations (9 into English, 2 into French, 4 into Italian, 1 into Swedish—i.e. remarkably few), his bibliography and index together with his exposition of the work itself make this book an indispensable compendium about a remarkable writer.

<sup>1</sup> Your reviewer knows only two handy and cheap editions of the resplendent *Die Bürger von Calais*, 1914 (Kessler, Mannheim, 1952 and Bayr. Verlagsanstalt, Bamberg, 1953).

University of Melbourne

R. H. SAMUEL

THE PENGUIN BOOK OF ITALIAN VERSE. Introduced and edited by George Kay (*Penguin*, 1958), pp. xxiii + 424.

While it will always be arguable just how far poetry can be appreciated without a mastery of the language in which it is written, it is undoubtedly



true that even a slice is better than no bread, particularly when the bread provided is 'il pane degli angeli'. Mr Kay has served up his slice with discretion and judgement. His selection covers virtually the whole course of Italian verse, from St Francis to the latest Montale. He has not attempted, rightly, to include extracts from long poems, which means, for instance, that the reader will find nothing from the *Divine Comedy*, though he will be able to discover that Dante did not only write the *Comedy*. More unfortunately he will find under Ariosto's name only that elegant piece of sensuous rhyming, the *Capitolo VII*, which will, perhaps, leave him with a somewhat odd impression of the author of the *Furioso*. But Ariosto, as Mr Kay points out, is not well served by his shorter poems. Perhaps one of the *Satire* would have been too long; if so a pity, for the quiet and graceful humour of those essays in self-portraiture would have commended them to English speaking readers.

Viewing the balance of the anthology as a whole one detects in the editor a personal inclination towards the early Sicilians and Tuscans, and later one is struck by the generous treatment of Michelangelo (24 poems) and Campanella (18 poems). The space afforded these poets might seem, to an Italian, disproportionate to, say, that given Carducci (5 poems), but, bearing in mind the book's purpose, one can only applaud, for these poets have a distinctly 'metaphysical' ring about them which, coupled with their intensely personal content, should make them peculiarly interesting for the English reader. On the other hand no space has been found for either Parini or Alfieri. Their odd dismissal in the useful brief introduction—'Parini and Alfieri seem, in their shorter poems, too conscious of what they were writing against'—is too abrupt and not at all clear. The 19th century is, however, well served with good selections of Foscolo and Leopardi and, of the moderns, Mr Kay offers us, very properly, Campana, Ungaretti, Montale, Quasimodo. Not so properly, he omits Saba completely, an omission the more odd because he offers no explanation.

The translations given at the foot of the page seek, as they should, to be as literal as possible, and on the whole they will undoubtedly fulfil their purpose of helping the reader with only a small knowledge of Italian. This sort of translating is by no means easy and one is pleased to find the occasional neat solution of a difficulty. In Petrarch's *Di pensier in pensier*, for instance, the oddly forceful expression 'assido me freddo' is skilfully caught in the rendering by a repetition of 'sit'. But it is to be regretted that there are a fair number of mistranslations which will mislead the unsuspecting reader, mistakes even in particularly well known poems. One or two examples must suffice: in Carducci's *Alla stazione* the third stanza has been misunderstood ('questa' in fact agrees with 'gente') and the translation as it stands is more or less meaningless. The last sentence of *A se stesso* has lost its force in a rendering which omits altogether the object 'te', essential to Leopardi's meaning. Foscolo did not speak of 'the rough verse' of Homer in *A Zacinto* (perhaps the translator confused 'inculto' and 'inclito'). It is to be hoped that these and other slips, together with a few misprints, may be rectified, if occasion permits, for they mar what is, otherwise, a praiseworthy and useful volume.

University of Sydney

C. A. McCORMICK

A HISTORY OF MODERN FRANCE. Alfred Cobban. Volume I: Old Regime and Revolution, 1715-1799. Penguin Books. London, 1957, pp. 287.

Histories of modern France customarily begin with the Great Revolution, or in its shadow. The gain in dramatic unity is obvious, whether the cause of historical balance is served or not. The great themes are given out in the first act, or in the prologue. Thereafter, lesser men play them out in baser scenes; the Mountain of '93 gives way to the Mountain of '48. Tragedy, wrote Marx, is repeated in farce. But the themes of 1789-94 outlast the farce. Penetrate to the heart of France's 'finest hour' (if her most tragic), so it seems, and you have the key to the modern French dilemma.

History, however, does not yield her secrets readily, even to so urgent a demand. Historians now recognize the Revolution as a 'backward-looking', eighteenth century event, though a nineteenth century myth. We must, wrote Professor Cobban in his inaugural lecture *The Myth of the French Revolution* (1954), 'forget if possible that 1789 has ever seemed a date from which to begin'. This is a counsel of perfection, but no man is better fitted than Cobban to take up afresh the great theme of de Tocqueville—the continuity of French history—in terms of modern scholarship.

He chooses to begin his account of modern France at 1715, his purpose being to emphasize that the whole eighteenth century was over-shadowed by problems left unsolved at the death of Louis XIV. He takes seriously the Sun King's alleged claim: 'L'état, c'est moi', and states that the dominant factor in the two succeeding reigns was 'the void left at the centre of the machinery of state by the death of Louis XIV'. At the top, French government was semi-medieval, in its lower administrative levels it was becoming modern, but it was the character of the monarch, or his ability to choose and support a strong first minister, that mattered supremely. Fleury, and in lesser degree, Orléans, filled the gap, but neither Louis XV nor Louis XVI could sit upon the throne of 'the greatest actor of majesty'. Fleury by what he did not do, rather than by what he did, enabled France to enjoy something like 'the golden age of the *ancien régime*'. Thereafter the will and the power to curb the great vested interests in society, administration, judiciary, and commerce became atrophied. Terray and Maupeou were the last hopes of the monarchy, rather than Turgot. Cobban entitles his chapter of the reign of Louis XVI 'The Age of Reform', but he describes the work of a reforming administration, not a reforming monarchy. The fateful turning point for the monarchy was the royal session of 23 June 1789, but that day merely registered what had deep roots in the eighteenth century: that the monarchy could not reform itself, and would not permit real social and fiscal reform.

Though political problems are central in his account, Cobban deals in masterly fashion with all major aspects of the period. With refreshing honesty, he frankly admits that his is a 'history of one-tenth of the French people'. Contemporaries ignored the peasants, and the extraordinarily difficult task of sifting partial and contradictory records in the social and economic sphere has not yet been really completed. Regional differences were great, and general conclusions may well differ widely. In intellectual history, Cobban is very far from Taine and the *thèse de complot*. Utopian ideas of progress had little real importance; the 'whole attitude of mind of the eighteenth century led up to one thing: practical reform'. Though this statement seems rather sweeping, or careless, it is clear that

the most down-to-earth thinkers, the Physiocrats, had greatest influence, and that political slogans had most effect where most insincerely used—by the *parlementaires* in defence, not of 'practical reform', but of their own privileges. Cobban will not allow that the Revolution was 'inevitable', though a revolution or series of changes may have lain in the logic of events. It was, in Robespierre's words, 'the judiciary, the nobles, the clergy, the rich' who 'gave the original impulse to revolution'. However, it was the coincidence of famine and political crisis that cemented the alliance of *tiers état* and *peuple* and made the Revolution of 1789.

Cobban's account of the pre-revolutionary period is the more important part of his book, but his account of the Revolution itself is admirable. It possesses the analytical power of Goodwin's recent survey, and much of the breadth and spirit of Thompson's classic work, yet it is more balanced than either. Following his main theme, he regards the revolution as the logical end-point of the weaknesses of the *ancien régime*, 'turning anarchy into a form of government'. This may suggest that Cobban is to be labelled, in the time-honoured manner, as a 'conservative' historian. Certainly he sees the Revolution as a 'conservative' event, but his chief interest is not in political ideas, but in political stability, whoever achieved it. As Boissy d'Anglas 'keynoted' the end of popular democracy (and anarchy), and proclaimed the rule of the bourgeoisie—thereby opening up for France a prospect of stability—he may be said to be Cobban's 'hero'. Across the vale of political misery which was the eighteenth century, Cobban links the names of the great king and the great emperor, pointing the way to a reassessment of Napoleon in his second volume, which, on this count alone, will be eagerly awaited. This first volume is, together with Cobban's own chapters in the *New Cambridge Modern History*, Vol. VII, the best general account of eighteenth century France we possess.

If a few criticisms may be ventured here, they are these: that he is contradictory on the subject of whether Louis XIV had destroyed the power of French corporative society; that he strives too hard to white-wash Louis XV as a near-reformer; that he seems too eager to prove that religion was dead in pre-revolutionary France; that his writing is sometimes marred by passages which seem hastily written and need revision; and, finally, that he can not resist a joke about Fleury's age or about the guillotine.

University of Canterbury

W. J. GARDNER

**KING OF THE FRENCH.** Agnes de Stoeckl. A Portrait of Louis Philippe, 1773-1850. London, John Murray, 1957, pp. 308.

This is not a book to be treated solemnly, but it commands respect. It is the sprightly work of a spry old lady of eighty-three, whose courage and industry one gladly salutes. Baroness de Stoeckl does not set out to instruct, but to re-create in an entertaining way a world of kings, courts, and royal families, which today seems antediluvian. Though it vanished in the deluge of 1914-18, it remains vividly alive in the mind of the Baroness, and she has set herself to study an older, curious example of it in the July Monarchy. No-one is better qualified to enter into the spirit of vanished courts than she is. Her long career has also covered the coming of large-scale professional history—filing cabinets in ivory towers, it has been maliciously called—to which classification is more important



than biography, and by which people are only studied for their 'significance' in great historical trends. Who now cares whether Louis Philippe had eight children, or none? He was the consummator of the bourgeois revolution of 1789, *et voilà tout*.

Baroness de Stoeckl knows better than this. Louis Philippe was a man before he was an historical figure. He was born a Bourbon, and kept his Bourbon instincts (and his most un-Bourbon meanness) behind the façade of 'citizen king'. Every schoolboy knows about the umbrella and the slices of ham, but they conceal the dynast and the money-grubber. Yet his rise to power in 1830 killed whatever was left of the traditional basis of kingship in France. What could there be permanent about a monarchy that was not legitimate, which was 'surrounded by republican institutions', and which was essentially based on broken pledges and confidence tricks? Louis Philippe bitterly complained: 'What perished in France in 1830 was not respect for a dynasty, but respect for anything'. But what respect did he deserve? His father had been a recklessly, crazily disloyal Bourbon; his own disloyalty was shiftily and calculating.

Baroness de Stoeckl despises her subject, and at the slightest excuse, or no excuse at all, she turns to more interesting people and events. She produces some quite hair-raising gossip from contemporary memoirs, and can't resist the seduction of a pretty woman. The real hero, or rather heroine, of her book is Marie Amélie, the long-suffering consort of Louis Philippe. Every inch a queen, she sought vainly to uphold royal codes of ethics against the scheming of her sister-in-law and the shiftiness of her husband. The only French king worthy of the title in the book is Louis XVIII, who could adapt monarchy to the times, without losing its spirit, even if he did not look the part. His brother, Charles X, looked like a king, but was an eighteenth century king, out of his period. There is quite a moving contrast in this book between chaos and trickery at the Palais Royal, and dignity and impotence at Rambouillet in July 1830.

When Louis Philippe is at last King, Baroness de Stoeckl can treat him with a modicum of respect, due no doubt to his status rather than to his person, and she can salute him at the kingly work of smiling in the face of assassins' bullets. The title 'King of the French' is quite a misnomer. Louis Philippe was, even on her showing, the ruler of a little Bourbon enclave, which he sought to extend over France in the manner of his remoter ancestors—by arts of publicity, by the judicious use of corruption, and by the power of his immense wealth. The bourgeoisie, of whom he was allegedly the symbol, formed a semi-independent territory, never under proper control. As for the rest, 'the French', they were never really subjects of the July Monarchy. Baroness de Stoeckl has even less time for them than for Louis Philippe. A cold and calculating schemer was well matched with so hot-headed and feckless a people, always ready to fling up a barricade, but 'soothed by a little cloud of pastry'. Above all, they offended the sensitive nose. They sweated and they smelt, so that French revolutions were more than disastrous, they were nauseating.

This is a scrapbook story of Louis Philippe, but like a good scrap-book it contains many fascinating pages, and conveys the atmosphere of a limited and transient world. Its subject was less than half a pretender in himself. His insufferable, interfering sister, Adélaïde, made up the remainder with her ruthless determination. Then came the fantastic opportunity of 1830. Napoleon needed a brother at the crisis of his life; Louis Philippe had his sister. What more is there to say?

The best thing in this book is the end—the enthralling story of how



'Mr Smith' escaped to England, and the hero is the English consul at Le Havre.

University of Canterbury

W. J. GARDNER

FRENCH EXPLORATION OF AUSTRALIA, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TASMANIA. L. A. Triebel and J. C. Batt. Hobart, 1957, pp. 94.

This volume supplements the record of two earlier books on French exploration in Australian seas. It consists of a series of extracts from the journals and other records of French explorers. The selected passages, often from rare and not easily accessible works, are presented in admirable translation, and accompanied by historical commentary. The account opens with the first recorded contact between Europeans and Tasmanian aboriginals—the visit of Marion du Fresne in 1712—which ended in tragic conflict, a grim omen for the future. The story of exploration closes with Dumont d'Urville's voyage in *L'Astrolabe* in 1826-9. In addition, there are extracts from French observations on British life and manners in colonial Australia, concluding with the remarks of the Count de Beauvoir who visited Hobart, and enjoyed the hospitality of Governor Gore Browne in 1866. The most interesting extract in this selection is d'Entrecasteaux's account of the Tasmanians in 1793 (pp. 34-40). It is to be hoped that the work of Professor Triebel and Miss Batt will prepare the way for new and full editions of the more important of these journals.

University of Canterbury

W. J. GARDNER

THE LIFE OF SAINT TERESA—A NEW TRANSLATION. J. M. Cohen, London, Penguin Classics, 1957, pp. 316.

The ideal reviewer of this work would be a theologian, a *littérateur*, and a Hispanist all in one. He should also be familiar with the already existing translation (apparently unobtainable in New Zealand at least) by the late Professor Allison Peers, who called Saint Teresa the greatest woman in Spanish history and has written convincingly about her style. The *Life*, it is claimed, is after *Don Quixote* the most widely read prose classic in Spanish literature.

The veriest layman does not have to read very far to become aware that he is walking in the company of a remarkable woman who in a direct and untutored manner mingles the story of her life with that of her religious experience. In the autobiographical sections one has the impression that such a many sided writer could have written a more than adequate picaresque novel, if she had had the mind to do so. Then we come to a passage like the following, not a little reminiscent, both in style and content, of the Book of Common Prayer:

I have often reflected with amazement on God's great goodness, and my soul has rejoiced in the thought of His magnificence and His mercy . . . Poor and imperfect as my works have been, this Lord of mine has improved and perfected them, and has increased their value. As for my wickednesses and sins He has immediately hidden them away . . .

It is a tribute to the translator that this and other such passages read so well in English, especially in view of Teresa's almost non-existent punctuation, aberrant syntax and her apparent disinclination ever to re-read anything she wrote.

Some of her self-confessed shortcomings endear her to the reader. '... I seem to be getting involved in many subjects'. In other matters, including that of prayer, she has her feet realistically on the ground, for example in the passage where a married woman is directed to prayer to the annoyance of her husband, when she has housework to do. She can write of her God as if she were a loyal but intimate subject: 'Well, His Majesty heard my prayer, and within two years I too was ill, though my illness was quite unlike that nun's.'

Her famous sustained metaphor based on different procedures in watering a garden and used to illustrate the successive stages of mental prayer is a digression from strict biography, but contains literary flights that we should be loth to lose.

University of Auckland

A. C. KEYS

TWELVE FRENCH POETS 1820-1900. Parmée, Douglas *London, Longmans, Green*, 1957, pp. lxii + 354.

This well-printed and attractive volume serves as an excellent introduction to the twelve major French poets of the 19th century from Lamartine to Rimbaud. As compared with *Nine French Poets 1820-1880* of H. E. Berthon (1930), it omits Sainte-Beuve, for whom Gérard de Nerval provides a more satisfactory substitute, and instead of stopping with Verlaine completes the dozen by the addition of Mallarmé, Laforgue and Rimbaud.

A yet earlier anthology intended for schools and Universities, *Les Poètes français du XIXe siècle* (Auguste Auzas, 1914), complicated the picture unnecessarily and unprofitably at one end by a preliminary section on 'Attardés et précurseurs', and went on as far as Heredia who spills over into the 20th century, including on the way Sully Prudhomme and Coppée as well as other lesser figures.

A more recent collection *Une centaine d'années de poésie française* (F. M. Forrest 1954), likewise beginning with Lamartine, ventures more discursively into modern and contemporary poets, but also feels constrained to drag in Coppée, Banville and Sully Prudhomme whom the present volume wisely omits.

The great merit of this anthology is that it sets itself severe limits (even to the extent of excluding Heredia whose sonnets some might prefer to those of Gérard de Nerval) and provides the tyro with a clear view of the major poets within the period. It is thus eminently suitable for students who otherwise might well feel terrified and bewildered by the sheer bulk of poetry that the 19th century has to offer. As with all anthologies, one might quarrel with the choice of particular poems, those by Victor Hugo, for example.

But these are personal matters, and provided that an anthology is regarded as a means to an end and not an end in itself, no harm is done. Indeed in the case of difficult poets like Mallarmé it were better that an introduction came through the poems here offered as examples, than that the uninitiated should attempt to plunge unaided into the difficulties of the *Après-midi d'un faune* or the *Coup de dés*.

The notes (pp. 273-354), which are considerably helped by the heavy-printed page and line references, strike a happy medium between the factual on one hand and the critical and interpretative on the other.

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## BOOKS RECEIVED

(\* Reviewed in this issue)

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- \*CAMPBELL, Roy. *Collected Poems*, Vol. II., London, The Bodley Head, 1957, pp. 256.
- \*CHISHOLM, A. R. *Thirty French Poems*, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1957, pp. 95.
- \*COBBAN, Alfred. *A History of Modern France*, Vol. I, Pelican, 1957, pp. 287.
- COLE, E. & COLE, P. J. *A la recherche du français*, Book 3, London, Harrap, 1957, pp. 232.
- DOSTOYEVSKY, Fyodor. *The Brothers Karamazov* (A new translation by David Magarshack), London, Penguin Classics, 2 vols., 1958, pp. xxvi + 913.
- EISNER, Sigmund. *A Tale of Wonder* (A Source study of *The Wife of Bath's Tale*), Wexford, John English, 1957, pp. 148.
- FOURRE, Pierre. *Médecin sous les tropiques*, London, Harrap, 1957, pp. 69.
- \*HACKETT, C. A. *Rimbaud* (Studies in Modern European Literature & Thought), London, Bowes & Bowes, 1957, pp. 109.
- \*HARRAP ANTHOLOGY OF GERMAN POETRY (ed. A. Closs & T. Pugh Williams), London, Harrap, 1957, pp. 563.
- HASSELL, J. W. Jnr. *Sources and Analogues of the Nouvelles Récréations et Joyeux Devis of Bonaventure des Périers*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press (No. 20, Studies in Comparative Literature), 1957.
- \*HATZFELD, Helmut. *Initiation à l'explication de textes français*. München, Max Hueber Verlag, 1957, pp. 196.
- \*HATZFELD, Helmut. *Trends and Styles in Twentieth Century French Literature*, Washington, Catholic Univ. of America Press, 1957, pp. ix + 262.
- \*HERD, E. W. *A General Education Through Specialization*, Dunedin, University of Otago, 1957 (Inaugural Lecture).
- \*HILTON, Walter. *The Ladder of Perfection* (trans. Leo Sherley-Price), Penguin Classics, 1957, pp. 256.
- HOCHWAELDER, Fritz. *Das heilige Experiment* (ed. J. R. Foster), London, Harrap, 1957, pp. 128.
- \*HOLLYMAN, K. J. *Le développement du vocabulaire féodal en France pendant le haut moyen âge* (étude sémantique), Geneva, Droz, (Paris, Minard), 1957, pp. 202.

## Books Received

- \*JONES, P. Mansell. *Modern Humanities in the Technological Age*, Manchester Univ. Press, 1957, pp. 18.
- \*JOHNSTON, R. C. and OWEN, D. D. R. *Fabliaux*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1957, pp. xxiii + 147.
- \*KENWORTHY, B. J. *Georg Kaiser*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1957, pp. xxiv + 217.
- KERR-WALLER, Elizabeth. *Montons sur les planches*, London, Harrap, 1957, pp. 93.
- LEDESERT, R. P. L. and D. M. *Trafic d'armes*, London, Harrap, 1957, pp. 64.
- MUSSET, Alfred de. *A Comedy and Two Proverbs* (tr. George Graveley), London, O.U.P., 1957, pp. 100.
- \*PARMEE, Douglas. *Twelve French Poets, 1820-1900*, London, Longmans Green, 1957, pp. lxii + 354.
- \*PENGUIN BOOK OF ITALIAN VERSE, THE (Ed. George R. Kay), London, 1958, pp. 424.
- \*PIPER, H. W. *Nature and the Supernatural in 'The Ancient Mariner,'* Armidale, Univ. of New England, 1957, pp. 30.
- PROUST, Marcel. *Swann's Way* (tr. Scott Moncrieff), London, Penguin, 1957, pp. 496.
- QUINT, Josef. *Textbuch zur Mystik des Deutschen Mittelalters*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1957, pp. xvi + 147.
- ROBERTS, Daniel. *François et l'armée secrète*, London, Grant, 1957, pp. 88.
- \*ROMAIN ROLLAND—Lugné—Poe. *Correspondance, 1894-1901* (ed. J. Robichez), Paris, L'Arche, 1957, pp. 239.
- ROY, Gabrielle. *La petite poule d'eau* (ed. J. Marks), London, Harrap, 1957, pp. 175.
- \*SONG OF ROLAND, The (Trans. Dorothy L. Sayers), Penguin Classics, 1957, pp. 206.
- \*STOECKL, Agnes de. *King of the French* (A Portrait of Louis-Philippe, 1773-1850), London, Murray, 1957, pp. xii + 308.
- TREHERNE, M. *Apprenons avec Anatole*, Book II, London, Harrap, 1957, pp. 88.
- \*TRIEBEL, L. A. and BATT, J. C. *French Exploration of Australia*, Hobart, Govt. Printer, pp. 94.
- \*VALLINS, G. H. *The Pattern of English*, London, Pelican, 1957, pp. 168.
- WELLS, Sydney W. *Plaisir du français*, London, Harrap, 1957, pp. 215.



## NOTES

**ARMIDALE CONGRESS:** The sixth biennial Congress of A.U.L.L.A. will be held at the University of New England, Armidale, New South Wales, from January 28th to February 3rd, 1959. The general subject of the Congress is to be 'The Twentieth Century: Literature, Criticism and Linguistic Studies'. Convenors of the Sections are as follows:

**CLASSICS**—Mr K. F. Quinn (Melbourne).

**ENGLISH**—Prof. H. W. Piper (New England).

**FRENCH**—Prof. J. G. Cornell (Adelaide).

**GERMANIC STUDIES**—Mr H. Wiemann (Melbourne).

**RUSSIAN**—Mrs N. Christesen (Melbourne).

Offerings of papers should be made to these Convenors not later than July 31st, 1958.

Delegates are warned to book early for travel arrangements, on account of the Australian holiday week-end preceding the Congress.

### NEW PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS ABROAD

A new publication, which appeared in January, 1958, is announced by the University of Colorado, U.S.A. *Abstracts of English Studies* is to be published monthly, and to provide abstracts of scholarly critical contributions to periodicals in the field of English. The Editor is Lewis Sawin, 123W Hellems, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado.

Indiana University announces the publication of a new journal *Victorian Studies*, as from the autumn of 1957. *Victorian Studies* is to appear quarterly, and to cover the period extending approximately from 1830 to 1914. It will take over from *Modern Philology* the annual publication *Victorian Bibliography*. The Editors are Philip Appleman, William Madden and Michael Wolff, and the subscription 35/- sterling annually.

### I.C.L.A. CONGRESS

A.U.L.L.A. will be represented at the Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association, to be held at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, in September, by Mrs H. Burger, of the Department of French, University of Melbourne.

### F.I.L.L.M.

News has been received from Dr S. C. Aston, General Secretary of the Fédération Internationale des Langues et Littératures Modernes, that the next Congress of the Association is to be held on August 28th-September 4th, 1960 at Liège in Belgium. The theme of the Congress is to be 'La Littérature

## *Notes*

et la Langue'. The programme will be organized substantially in the same way as in 1954 and in 1957.

The officers of the Liège Committee are as follows:

President: Professor M. Delbouille.

Treasurer: Dr A. Nivelles.

Joint Secretaries: Professor Irène Simon, Professor Jules Horrent.

Members of A.U.L.L.A. who anticipate being on leave in Europe during 1960 and who will be interested in attending the above Congress are asked to notify the Honorary Secretary, Dr H. Maclean, Department of Germanic Languages, University of Melbourne, Australia.







